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Daily Report
Central Eurasia

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Russia: Yeltsin: 'Maybe' Second Meeting With Yavlinskiy Needed

LD0705141796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1253 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who is running for re-election, told an Interfax special correspondent in a brief exclusive interview during his visit to a village in Moscow's Narofominsk district Tuesday, that he was "satisfied with his talks with Grigoriy Yavlinskiy."

"Maybe one more meeting will be needed," he added. He said that one more meeting with the leader of the Yabloko movement and registered presidential candidate "is needed for specifying the terms of our cooperation." Yeltsin said his first meeting with Yavlinskiy was "normal, good and without a scandal."

He also announced that he had invited for talks one more presidential candidate, Svyatoslav Fedorov. "I will discuss the possibility of joining forces with Fedorov as well," he said. He stated that he believed in the possibility of "gradually reaching an agreement with the democratic candidates." He also emphasized that there was very much in common in his and the democratic candidates' views on the development of the country. Yeltsin said he hoped "to unite all of the democratic-minded presidential candidates."

"At least I'm actively working to create such a coalition," he said.

"Russia is not indifferent to whether or not democratic reforms will continue," he said. "We have gone through the most dramatic period in the life of the country and in our lives as well. We must continue our advancement together and do everything we can to prevent a roll-back to totalitarianism," said Yeltsin.

Russia: Yavlinskiy Said Negotiating Pullout Terms With Yeltsin

MK0705135296 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 7 May 96 p 3

[Report by Natalya Arkhangelskaya: "According to Newton's Law Yabloko [Apple] Should Fall"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is not ruled out that those expecting the emergence of a "third force" in mid-May in the form of a Yavlinskiy-Lebed-Svyatoslav Fedorov coalition, as already announced, will be disappointed. Instead of the long-awaited "coalition of three," quite a different setup could emerge in the electoral space (moreover, with the active participation of the potential "third force" elements).

According to General Lebed, consultations between him, Yavlinskiy, and Fedorov have been going on for four months now. And during this time, the general stresses with satisfaction, none of the sides have violated the accords. What these accords are only the high contracting parties know. As concerns the voters — for whose sake these election associations are, in fact, formed — they heard only two joint statements by the three politicians: on the future of the Paratroopers and on the State Duma's repeal of the Belovezhskaya agreements. The finalization of the alliance is dragging out hopelessly. At the very best it will occur a month before elections, which is far too late. Furthermore, the creation of a coalition is possible only with one condition; that is, two of the politicians must agree to cede leadership to a third — supposedly Yavlinskiy. And it is very difficult to believe in this voluntary sacrifice on the part of the two remaining figures. Something that was in effect confirmed by General Lebed in a recent interview, saying, that at the head of their potential coalition, "instead of one leader there is a whole bunch." This ceases to look strange if one assumes that the "coalition of three" idea is a tactical artifice, while the strategic objective is to create quite a different sort of alliance: one, for instance, with the incumbent president.

According to sources close to the president, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy began to put out feelers as to the possibility of going to the June elections together with Boris Yeltsin as prime minister almost immediately after the December vote. At first this was done via intermediaries, but there was no response. Meanwhile, there was all that bustle around the "coalition of three" that took on the form of minor blackmailing. Yavlinskiy behaved so daringly that at one point he even invited Yeltsin to pull out of the race. Even so, in mid-April Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Boris Nemtsov, who knows the Yabloko leader quite well, said that in his opinion Yavlinskiy "is ready for direct negotiations with Yeltsin without any preconditions." Nemtsov turned out to be right: Yavlinskiy put everything on the line. According to the same sources, in late April he sent a personal letter to Yeltsin formulating his proposals. Last Sunday Yavlinskiy had an opportunity to discuss them with his addressee, in person, during the course of a more than two-hour talk. On the same day, sharing his impressions from contacts with the president with an Itogi anchor, Yavlinskiy — who until then was one of the harshest critics of Yeltsin — was full of reverence for the head of state and of hopes that the dialogue with him will not be interrupted.

Nemtsov, however, was not quite right concerning Yavlinskiy's amenability: Today the fate of the dialogue that began between the Yabloko leader and the head of state depends on whether the Kremlin will deem acceptable the proposals Yavlinskiy advanced in exchange for his pulling out of the presidential race. According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY Yavlinskiy considers only the post of prime minister to be a fitting compensation for his abdication. Yeltsin, for his part, is thus far ready to offer him only deputy premiership. Time will tell how strong Chernomyrdin's positions are and whether Yavlinskiy's hopes to carry the election in tandem with Yeltsin will be justified.

Russia: Yeltsin Shown Campaigning in Naro-Fominsk Village

LD0705140696 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1300 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Summary] In a two-minute report with accompanying video Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin is shown on the campaign trail in the village of Naro-Fominsk near Moscow.

Yeltsin, dressed in a smart dark suit, alights from a car and approaches a crowd of welcoming villagers. A man standing by him whispers and gesticulates that he has lipstick on his cheek and hands him a handkerchief. One of the ladies of the village wipes his cheek and gives him a kiss and wipes his cheek again, the incident causing much merriment.

Speaking of his plans for the short term to a crowd of children, Yeltsin says: "I shall be going to the Far East, to Khabarovsk — everywhere — to the Urals, to the South, to the Caucasus, to North, to Murmansk — everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere. Russia is 17 million square km of land, territory — 17 million. There is no such country in the world."

He is then shown in someone's home. Filmed outside in the village he says: "But we shall be even better off. Life will improve, improve and improve this year and and especially in 1997 life will improve. Unless we lose at the elections on 16 June our reform will continue and life will improve."

Russia: Yeltsin Visits Veterans, Local Shop in Naro-Fominsk

LD0705232396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1700 GMT 7 May 96

[Report by Nikolay Ivanov, Vladimir Agafonov, and Aleksandr Ovsharov; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The president started his working day this morning with a trip to Naro-Fominskiy district, near Moscow. [video shows Yeltsin at a war memorial welcomed by a group of veterans]

Fierce battles were fought in the Naro-Fominsk sector in 1941. A whole regiment of the defenders of the country lies buried near the small village of Ateptsevo. On the eve of Victory Day, President Boris Yeltsin honored the memory of those who died in the war and met veterans. The head of state planted a tree at the war memorial and laid flowers at the obelisk. Conversations with veterans were interrupted only when veterans showed their feelings for the president and uttered informal and sincere words of support for the elections. [video shows a woman veteran kissing Yeltsin on the cheek]

[Begin Yeltsin recording] The savings of those who lost them in 1992, starting from 1992 and up to this day, up to the year 1996 — these savings will be compensated. Otherwise, many people have indeed saved only just enough for their funerals — I am sorry — and these savings have lost value now. So the state will compensate for that, and you should be sure of that. It will be good support for veterans, first of all. [end recording] [passage omitted on Yeltsin talking to children]

Boris Nikolayevich was shown a local shop. The president noted that prices were lower than in Moscow but politely declined to take a gift basket with locally made meat products.

[Begin recording] [Yeltsin] So these are not Bush drumsticks [imported U.S. chicken legs] but locally produced ones?

[Unidentified man] No, these are our Russian drumsticks.

[Yeltsin] The Naro-Fominsk drumsticks. Was anything brought here especially for my visit?

[Shop assistant] Nothing at all. What you see is what we have every day.

[Yeltsin] Today's range is the same you had yesterday and the day before?

[Assistant] Yes.

[Yeltsin] Will the customers confirm this? That there is nothing just for show here?

[Customer] Of course, it is a very good shop. [end recording]

Yeltsin drank tea with pies when he visited a family of local residents. Later he said with satisfaction that the times when people had to go to Moscow to buy sausages are in the past. If we win the elections we will live even better, the president said. [video shows Yeltsin drinking tea in an apartment]

Assisted by a war veteran, the head of state planted a tree at the garden cooperative the Home Guard [Opolchenets]. It transpired in a conversation that the president and his family are preoccupied with the same down-to-earth problems as the villagers.

[Begin Yeltsin recording] I also grow, first of all, potatoes, carrots, beetroot, radish, onions, and garlic on my garden plot. We fully provide ourselves with potatoes. We dig up 10 sackfuls of potatoes and they last us a whole season. [end recording]

Russia: Yeltsin Seen as Most Popular Candidate in Irkutsk Region

LD0705201596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1433 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IRKUTSK, May 7 (Interfax-Eurasia) — Irkutsk region residents prefer incumbent Russian President Boris Yeltsin to all the other candidates running for the upcoming presidential elections, according to a poll conducted by a regional sociological center earlier this May.

Yeltsin got the support of 22 percent of those polled, followed by leader of the Communist Party Gennadiy Zyuganov with 18 percent, Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy with 7.9 percent and Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy with 7.4 percent. About 30 percent of Irkutsk region residents are still undecided for whom to vote.

The poll showed that 57.3 percent of voters are expected to come to the polls.

Russia: Photo-Spread of Yeltsin's 'Meet the People' Visits Described

MM0805113696

[FBIS Report] Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian devotes pages 8-9 of its 5 May 1996 tabloid "Sunday Edition" to a center-spread "Photo Reportage" consisting of a set of nine D. Donskoy photographs of President Yeltsin during "meet the people" contacts with various groups of Russian society. The photographs, taken from the book "Russia's First President" [Pervyy Prezident Rossii], are carried under the headline "Boris Yeltsin: I Believe in My Fellow Citizens!" and prefaced by the following unattributed introduction:

"These are not photo-opportunity 'meet the people visits': Russians know that Boris Nikolayevich, unlike many of his political rivals, mingles with people not in order to express his own views but primarily to listen to what people think. It is not only as voters that they interest him: Throughout the five years of his presidency he has kept his finger on the pulse of the country and has visited places where a priority problem needed to be solved or help or consultation was needed. And people have always appreciated this sincere interest and reciprocated.

"There have been fewer of these visits than the president would have wished or 'free politicians' might have allowed themselves: Affairs of state severely restrict the head of state in both his actions and his promises: He knows the real value of time and the real cost of the reforms which have been started in the country. To be fair, it has to be said that Russians have always had an understanding attitude toward the president's lot and have been sincerely glad of any opportunity of contact with him.

"Of course, President Boris Yeltsin has always been helped by his charisma — or, as Russians would put it, an exceptional life coupled with a unique character and its resultant feeling of strength, reliability, and calmness. There is nobody in the country better-known than Yeltsin. This is why he is so vulnerable to criticism. But this is also his strength: He is open to people, is always ready for dialogue, and believes in his fellow citizens, their sense, industriousness, and zest."

The accompanying photographs show Yeltsin:

— in the company of a group of priests (caption reads "On the sacred soil of Valaama");

— speaking though a bullhorn ("I wish to be heard");

— kissing a folded flag surrounded by a group of naval officers and seamen ("Navy ritual");

— surrounded by a crush of tv and press cameras ("On 'first-name terms' with the press");

— chatting to a young child among a group of mothers ("Support of future voters");

— drinking from a bowl surrounded by a group of people of Central Asian appearance ("A drink of koumiss]")

— pressing the flesh on a walkabout under the watchful eye of what appears to be a security man ("Everybody wants to shake the president's hand");

— kissing the hand of veteran ballerina Yekaterina Maksimova ("Homage to talent"); and

— making a forceful point in conversation with a group of fur-hatted women during an apparent walkabout ("The weight of the president's word").

Russia: Wife Defends Yeltsin Against Tver Veterans' Reproaches

MM0705135296 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Report by Yuriy Burov: "Heroes of the Great Victory Meet Naina Yeltsina in Tver Without Enthusiasm"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tver — Rumors that President Yeltsin would soon be visiting ancient Tver had been circulating for a long time, but in the event only his wife turned up. Naina Iosifovna began her visit with a meeting in the oblast administration with Heroes of the Soviet Union and full holders of the Order of Glory.

Governor V. Platov handed each of them a jubilee medal and a gift. He expressed regret that the country today finds itself in an extremely difficult economic situation and that veterans' lives are difficult. But he assured them that this is a temporary phenomenon, and better times lie ahead.

In his answering speech Hero of the Soviet Union Aleksandr Petrovich Nikolayev thanked him for his attention and said:

"I met Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin in 1983; that was in the days of the USSR, for which we all fought and shed blood. And now that great country is no more. Friends from the front line and comrades from my regiment, who forged fiery victory together and purged our common Motherland of the fascist scum suddenly find themselves in different countries. And our letters cannot suppress our great sorrow over this fact."

The front line veteran requested that Naina Iosifovna pass on these words to her husband.

N. Yeltsina tried to argue that Boris Nikolayevich was by no means to blame for the destruction of the Union. That, on the contrary, he endeavored to do everything to prevent it:

"I do not wish to whitewash my husband — he has made mistakes, but he has done too much good [slishkom mnogo khoroshego] for Russia.. And now he is doing everything to ensure that the CIS countries live in peace and have political freedom. He decided to run for a second term as president only to improve the lives of Russians... And however difficult things may be, stabilization is after all coming, life is becoming easier and easier all the time...."

The meeting, which began with tactful, but firm reproaches against the president, apparently upset Naina Iosifovna — she actually could not hold back tears. She made a heartfelt plea to her listeners to believe that her husband will tirelessly concern himself only with what is good for Russia and with the welfare of Russians.

Wiping her eyes with a handkerchief, Naina Iosifovna handed the veterans presents from the president — wristwatches. [passage omitted]

Russia: Duma Deputy Urges 'Practical Actions' To Boost Yeltsin Support

MM0805092696 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Article by State Duma Deputy Boris Fedorov: "Contenders Hold Rallies While President Acts"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Unfortunately, so far we have not seen the large-scale upsurge of support for reform by the people which we witnessed in 1990-1991. The election campaign is therefore proceeding according to a different game plan.

Boris Yeltsin is again the main contender. Only Zhirinovskiy and Tuleyev are left of the other contenders in 1991, but they will not play a key role. However, Yeltsin does not have the advantage which he enjoyed during that period, either.

What can be done in the remaining weeks? What is holding back Yeltsin, who is undoubtedly the embodiment of Russia's forward motion?

First, the president differs from the contenders precisely by virtue of the fact that he can act and perform specific tasks. It is therefore Yeltsin's actions rather than the number of rallies held or the efforts by his imagemakers which will underwrite his success. Second, the regime's actions have to be transparent and tangible so that people can make the correct choice regardless of political affiliation.

I will venture to touch on just four questions here: cadres, Chechnya, finances, and the struggle against crime and corruption.

Cadre policy. I do not think anyone will be able to explain the practical point of steps like almost all the high-level appointments made in the economic ministries and departments in the last two years (Artyukhov is the best example). Good people are torn from their jobs and thrown into areas of work where they achieve nothing and never could have achieved anything. The result is that the president wastes time and loses prestige.

A reluctance to get rid of people who have been a dead weight around the government's neck for years and are a source of ridicule is the other side of the coin. The upshot is that society forms the image of an incompetent government, which gets associated with the name of the president.

Why have Svyatoslav Fedorov and Boris Gromov not been enlisted by the government? If the will had been there, work could have been found even for Glazyev, Lebed, and Skokov. After all, it is a noted phenomenon that a responsible post quickly sorts out the lightweights and windbags from the professionals. And there would be greater harmony in society.

Chechnya. In my view, the president has done all that could have been done in the current situation to advance peace. But let us give an honest answer to the following question: Can the president in the current situation instantaneously restore peace by his own actions while preserving Russia's territorial integrity?

Unfortunately, miracles do not exist. I do not believe that Shamil Basayev and a handful of other "friends" of the Moscow liberals will start disarming voluntarily. On the other hand, the majority of Chechens do not, I am sure, wish to fight and die to further Dudayev's cause and will not do so.

The solution therefore is to combine all the methods, ranging from propaganda, persuasion, and support for the local authorities to protection of the population and the professional neutralization of the terrorists.

To date our state machine has proven to be weak in the former and latter regard. There is still time to draw the necessary conclusions. A great state cannot calmly look on while soldiers, who at this moment are the direct representatives of power, are cut down with impunity.

Finances and the budget. Recent months have highlighted the very grave problem of the nonpayment of wages, which stems from our constantly unrealistic budget and the lack of financial discipline at all levels. The problem has grown several times over in the last two years.

The president has given thousands of officials a "shake-up," executive discipline has improved, and the budget debt has been reduced. But the roots of the problem have not been touched. The ordinary person could get the impression that a few members of the Finance Ministry are simply concealing the money of the poor people in the budget-financed sector. People will sense no relief without far tougher measures.

Corruption and law and order. The people have been waiting for tough measures in this sphere for a long time. To date we have only observed periodic flurries of activity, but without substantial results. Only specific actions can make people believe the president's plans are serious.

I am deeply convinced that the capabilities and effectiveness of the relevant services, in other words the ability to strike a serious blow against criminals of all kinds, have not been lost. Moreover, the struggle against corruption, in particular, will inevitably provide an additional source of much-needed financial resources.

The most dangerous thing today is to deal additional trump cards to people like Zyuganov. The example of the Belarusian agreements has shown that practical actions are far more persuasive than the empty political noisemaking in which the Communists have engaged in the State Duma.

I would very much like the elections to be not just an expression of Russians' will but the inception of a new stage of economic reforms and democratic transformations in Russia. It is time to start pondering what we will do after the elections.

Russia: Zyuganov 'Ready To Reach Consensus' With Yeltsin

LD0705154096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1516 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Interfax) — The leader of the Communist Party of Russia, Gennadiy Zyuganov, told Interfax in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport Tuesday upon his return from Germany that he was ready to meet with Russian President Boris Yeltsin to discuss the situation in the country.

Zyuganov said he had "heard of Yeltsin's interest in such a meeting." At the same time, he said he had no idea as to when it could be held.

Prior to this, Yeltsin had met with two other presidential hopefuls, retired general Aleksandr Lebed and Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy.

Zyuganov said he and the political forces supporting him were "ready to reach consensus on the basis of supreme values, such as security, integrity, prosperity and peace in Russia."

Speaking on his possible consultations with Yeltsin, Zyuganov underlined that a political compromise was a "normal and natural phenomenon." At the same time, he said these consultations "must not be turned into separate talks of some individuals on the top level." The talks "must reflect the basic interests of Russian voters," he said.

Zyuganov declined to say what exactly he wanted to discuss with Yeltsin, saying, "First we will discuss the situation, and then we will see."

"Now everyone is concerned about stability while holding honest, fair and democratic elections as well as guarantees for freedom of speech, press and the multiparty system, that no one will be subjected to political persecution afterwards," he said. "Life will not end after the elections."

The time of Zyuganov's possible meeting with Yeltsin is still unknown, the Communist faction press service told Interfax. Zyuganov plans to make an election trip to Nizhniy Novgorod, Arzamas, Tver, Perm and Yekaterinburg on May 11 to 16, it said.

Russia: Zyuganov Program Targets Non-Communist Opposition Voters

MK0805112996 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 8 May 96 p 2

[Report by Gleb Cherkasov: "Gennadiy Zyuganov's Election Program Will Be Promulgated in Mid-May. The Opposition Is Quite Happy With the Framework of the Current Legislation and Constitution"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The election program of Gennadiy Zyuganov, a presidential candidate from the national-patriotic forces, will be approved and promulgated in mid-May. It is not ruled out that this will happen in Yekaterinburg: On 16 May the opposition leader will be visiting Boris Yeltsin's homeland.

According to our sources Mr. Zyuganov's election program will substantially differ from both the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] program and the Communist Party election program in the 1995 parliamentary elections. Presumably, the election platform of the national-patriotic leader will incorporate proposals from those parties and movements that have supported Gennadiy Zyuganov. Predictably, Mr. Zyuganov's program might not be too communist in its content.

The CPRF has never had an official analytical institution to provide ideological substantiation or engage in analytical research. At present several structures simultaneously are working on Mr. Zyuganov's election program.

The RUSO (Russian Socialist-Oriented Scientists), headed by Ivan Osadchiy, is considered to be the most orthodox communist analysis center among those closely associated with the CPRF. The Communist Party has used RUSO material in its 1993 and 1995 campaigns, but because Mr. Zyuganov's one major task in the upcoming elections is to win the non-communist oppositionist voter to his side, the opposition leader's election campaign managers had to broaden the scope of their analysts.

Prominent among the non-communist analytical centers is the RAU-Corporation, which earlier worked with Aleksandr Rutskoy and Dmitriy Rogozin, founder of the Congress of Russian communities [KRO]. Formal cooperation between the RAU-Corporation and the CPRF began in spring 1995, when the Spiritual Heritage Association was created, immediately joining the CPRF. Spiritual Heritage leader Aleksey Podberezkin, who is at the same time chief of the RAU-Corporation, was included in the central part of the Communist Party list. True, friendship between Gennadiy Zyuganov and the RAU began much earlier: According to some reports in 1991-1992 the present CPRF leader was on the staff of Mr. Podberezkin's structure. A representative of the communist movement who recently disagreed with Gennadiy Zyuganov told your SEGODNYA correspondent that the "national-etatist" shift in the CPRF leader's outlook emerged to a large extent due to Mr. Podberezkin's impact.

Thus far the greatest difficulties have appeared in the economic section of the program of the single opposition candidate. Apparently Gennadiy Zyuganov was dissatisfied with the project drafted by a group led by Duma Economic Policy Committee Chairman Yuriy Maslyukov. Mr. Maslyukov's predecessor, Sergey Glazyev, was later involved in the effort. So far it is not known whether Mr. Glazyev will only improve and adjust Maslyukov's project or will write an altogether new program for Mr. Zyuganov.

Serious debates continue around the international part of the opposition leader's election program. Besides Ivan Melnikov, secretary of the CPRF Central Committee for international affairs, this work is also handled by Mr. Podberezkin.

The "military" part of the election program is in the charge of Mikhail Surkov, deputy chairman of the Duma Defense Committee. True, by his own admission, this section has been written by current military leaders. Mr. Surkov said yesterday that the program calls for military reform to be moved from the jurisdiction of the defense minister and envisions the creation of a certain agency that would coordinate the activity of all power structures. Mr. Surkov assessed the present state of the military as "the remnants of former armed forces that have not as yet disintegrated completely." Mikhail Surkov in principle agrees with Aleksandr Lebed's statement that it is enough to have 15 fully manned divisions to ensure Russia's defense needs.

Comparatively less attention in Zyuganov's program is being given to matters of legislation. According to a working group member the framework of the current legislation is quite conducive to making all the necessary adjustments in the socioeconomic course. Thus, for instance, none of the legislative enactments, including the Constitution, say that after the president has prepared an annual message to the Federal Assembly the members of both houses may not discuss it and adopt a corresponding resolution. The idea of immediately introducing amendments into the Constitution is apparently falling into political oblivion.

At present, the process of merging the thematic parts into a single whole is in the final stages: This work is coordinated by CPRF Central Committee Secretaries Aleksandr Shabanov, in charge of ideology; and Viktor Peshkov, responsible for the Communist Party's election campaign.

While some ideological or editorial problems might yet emerge over the opposition candidate's program, there will apparently be no difficulties with its popularization. According to our sources the CPRF faction has already drawn up schedules for deputies' agitation trips in the regions. To all appearances the opposition will refrain from promotional video footage and will again bank mainly on the "street" forms of agitation among the population that proved their worth during the parliamentary elections.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Proposes Union With Yeltsin, Zyuganov

LD0705193196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1600 GMT 7 May 96

[Video report by Correspondent A. Zotov with recorded statements by LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy — from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Svetlana Sorokina] The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR] leader [Vladimir Zhirinovskiy] today met the leaders of Moscow's Muslim community.

[Correspondent A. Zotov] On the premises of the Muslims' religious society (Bayt Allah), a warm homely atmosphere was created for the LDPR leader. Vladimir Volfovich was also in quite an amiable mood.

[Zhirinovskiy] Addressing Russia's Muslims, I can say I am close to them in terms of culture and origin.

[Zotov] Having noted that Islam stood for a more harmonious relationship between men and women, he promised, in the event of his victory, all kinds of support in building mosques and religious schools. Zhirinovskiy also said there was a possibility of the election not going ahead after all. He believes, however, that the most realistic option would be a union between Yeltsin, Zyuganov, and himself, which would mean the incumbent president keeps his post while the policy and the composition of the government are changed. [video shows Zhirinovskiy and several unidentified Muslim leaders in traditional attire sitting on a sofa sipping tea]

Russia: Lebed Meets Moscow Intelligentsia, Discusses Elections

LD0705225896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2002 GMT 7 May 96

[By Tatyana Selivanova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — Presidential candidate General Aleksandr Lebed had a meeting with Moscow's intelligentsia at the House of Cinema today.

Lebed, ostensibly one of the triumvirate of leaders of the "third-force" bloc, two others being economist Grigoriy Yavlinskiy and eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fedorov, said he did not preclude likelihood of the third-force coalition.

He said Yavlinskiy might be fielded as its sole candidate in the June 16 presidential election, adding that this is "a subject for consultations" which "can and should be carried out".

Lebed pointed out, however, that the consultations "have not so far resulted in any agreement".

He told the audience that he did not believe that "the two known figures can find themselves in the finale of the election", referring to the forerunners, President Boris Yeltsin and communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov.

As for the prospect of his becoming the defence minister if the third-force coalition wins the election, the general said shadow cabinets of different candidates offer him the role of a "chastiser", but he is "not a chastiser but a soldier".

Lebed said he knows how "what to do to make the the army respected within the course of weeks", adding that he backs the concept of alternative military service.

He further related that he positively views Chilean General Augusto Pinochet, who "has brought order to his country, something which we lack so much".

Asked about NATO's plan of eastward expansion, Lebed said it was time "to stop to respond to it painfully".

"They are wary not of our strength but of our weakness, of our falling apart with nuclear weapons," he explained.

Lebed said he thought the settlement in Chechnya is a political rather than military problem.

According to Lebed, the war in Chechnya is "the result of a plot of several high-placed officials".

Russia: Fedorov Denies Any Plans To Withdraw From Election Race

LD0705203196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1521 GMT 7 May 96

[By Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — One of "third-force" presidential candidates, eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fedorov, has denied that he is going to withdraw from the election race in favour of Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, the second leader of the "third force" bloc.

Fedorov's statement, circulated today, follows the denial by General Aleksandr Lebed that he leaves the race to give place to Yavlinskiy.

The statement says that the reports alleging that the third force bloc had agreed to field one candidate and that Fedorov had quit as a presidential candidate "do not hold truth".

Fedorov said "consultations are being conducted on a common pre-election platform and related questions of further joint action".

Meanwhile, Fedorov is on election tours of Russian regions. Today's statement says he is now meeting electorates of the Voronezh region, central Russia.

Russia: Gorbachev Holds Election Meeting With Russian Writers

LD0705225996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1541 GMT 7 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Natalya Panshina]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 7 May (ITAR-TASS) — Today's meeting which one of the contenders for the post of Russian president, Mikhail Gorbachev, held with a group of Russian writers, from whom he had most likely hoped to find support and understanding, acquired an unexpected turn. The representatives of the creative intelligentsia, although with reservations, voiced support for Boris Yeltsin's candidacy in the forthcoming June elections.

According to Mikhail Gorbachev, he himself is also "ready to forgive" the incumbent Russian president "many things" if only because Boris Yeltsin firmly intends not to allow the cancellation of the elections. The ex-president of the USSR expressed doubt that the Communist Party candidate will win the elections, however, he maintains that those currently in power are leading the country "only towards a split." As for the "third force", Gorbachev said that the lack of agreement on this issue was due not only to the leaders' ambitions but to the fact that "the powers that be are energetically trying to pull this center apart."

In the opinion of one of the participant's of the meeting, the writer Benedikt Sarnov, for "an average inhabitant of Russia, only Yeltsin can be an alternative to Zyuganov." Another literary man — Leonid Zhukhovitskiy also does not see a man today around whom all democratic forces could unite. Zhukhovitskiy said that the trouble lies in the fact that today there is no "complex of ideas" to unite Russia's inhabitants. Developing this idea, Benedikt Sarnov advised Mikhail Gorbachev and the fund of political and social research headed by him that they should be engaged in working out "a constructive national program." "This is more important than being president," he noted.

Among the participants of the meeting also were Aleksandr Kabakov, Naum Korzhavin, Dmitriy Prigov, Andrey Chernov, and Mariya Rozanova — altogether about 30 people.

Mikhail Gorbachev did not heed the literary men's wishes but expressed his desire to be "a pragmatist and realist." He said that around 17 May he would announce his election program. The ex-president of the USSR, who has already visited nine regions of Russia, intends to continue his election trips in the near future: On 14 May he is to leave for his native Stavropol Territory.

Russia: Implications of Korzhakov's Vote Delay Statement Viewed

MK0705123796 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 7 May 96 p 1, 3

[Report by Georgiy Bovt: "A Purely European Drama"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As a classic once observed: A European suffers the most from the need to make a choice. If so, then the extensive talk about Russia's integration into Europe is no longer hollow sounding. Preelection passions in Russia have grown into a full-fledged drama at quite a European level — true, with some Russian specifics, and with a dashing and gripping subject. In his Sunday interview with THE OBSERVER Lt. Gen. Aleksandr Korzhakov — chief bodyguard of the Russian president, who is now campaigning for reelection — expressed his personal point of view; namely, that it would be good if the 16 June elections were postponed. [passage omitted]

What lies behind Korzhakov's statement: his personal and sincere opinion, aggravated by his "lack of sophistication" in the fine political game; a cold calculation arising from under-the-rug intrigue; or a brilliantly played — as in tennis — blitz game, wherein the bodyguard comes out with an obviously no-no statement to enable his boss to return the ball to his court in a graceful shot?

First of all, it is clear that Korzhakov's statement echoes the "appeal by the group of 13" entitled "To Break the Deadlock!" that was promulgated in late April. It echoes it, but not on all points. Both recognize that society is split into irreconcilable camps. Both call for stability. The authors of the appeal, however, as is known, did not prescribe any political recipes, but only called on politicians to look for a compromise. It does not at all follow from the appeal that a compromise with the Communists should be understood as a compromise with Communism. As for Korzhakov, and some people in the president's inner circle, they could have interpreted the idea of a compromise as a delay in the elections. This opinion, however, does not necessarily coincide with that of the authors of the appeal.

Moreover, the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] leader is thus far showing no propensity to make any compromise except in the form of the elimination of the incumbent authority — both personally and institutionally (in the form of corresponding amendments to the Constitution). Neither is the CPRF chairman making any advances toward the electorate of the other political forces, nor is he evolving ideologically in any direction. Indeed, you can hardly describe as a propensity for compromise the Communist leader's strong aversion to clarifying his position on key economic and political problems. It is enough to recall the April live TV dialogue between Yevgeniy Kiselev and Zyuganov. The anchor asks him several times in a row: Are you ready to guarantee the inviolability of private property? And the CPRF chairman only smiles enigmatically, saying something incomprehensible about a mixed economy. If the CPRF leader continues to be that enigmatic about his actions in the future, and that rhetorically menacing toward the incumbent "criminal regime," then the "appeal of the 13" will simply hang in an atmosphere of misunderstanding.

Incidentally, neither does Yeltsin seem to be inclined to talk on an equal basis with the presidential candidate known as Zyuganov. Under unwritten election canons, such a dialogue could contribute to strengthening the authority of the contender and to enhancing his stature in the eyes of the electorate — with minimal chances of any compromise being reached. In this context Korzhakov's interview could have also pursued such a delicate aim as to nullify the "appeal of the 13," thus stopping its further evolution according to its original logic. After all, Yeltsin's election campaign would not be hurt by a certain measure of drama. Will there be a delay or will there not be a delay, the common man will start wondering — thus arising from political slumber. Moreover, Yeltsin is increasingly associated with the slogan of stability and continuity, whereas Zyuganov and the CPRF are associated with new reform with unpredictable consequences.

Or maybe we should not overdramatize things? Well, what if Korzhakov expressed his purely personal opinion. After all, earlier he said that he did not like Pavel Grachev as defense minister. The latter, meanwhile, is still serving the president.

Russia: Korzhakov Election Comments Seen as 'Psychological Attack'

MK0705123696 Moscow KURANTY in Russian 7 May 96 p 3

[Report by Viktor Bondarev: "General Korzhakov's Psychological Attack"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The president makes it clearly understood through all his conduct that the elections will take place. General Korzhakov stated on two occasions the need for putting off the nationwide voting until much later. How can such divergent stances between the state's top man and his, as is conventionally thought, first "boyar" coexist? And can they add up to a unified policy, or is there already friction and conflict at the very "top"?

Yeltsin is now on the way up, and real signs for a possible victory are already in evidence. Furthermore, the head of state, who is recognized as a democrat all over the world and who thinks that his historical mission is to build democracy in Russia, cannot decide against the elections without losing face. Therefore, there is no doubt whatsoever but that the general is not acting on the president's instruction. But since Korzhakov has been in a position of power for more than one year, it is impossible to assume that this is an individual initiative, and so there stand behind the declared position certain forces. And there is a certain objective.

As are many people, the general is far from having faith in the turning point in public opinion reached to date and, having sufficient information in the line of duty, he realizes very well that some fight should yet be put up for victory. It is possible and necessary to consolidate the supporters; that is, to organize a powerful agitation campaign. Indeed, a major part of the ruling elite, especially in the regions, has adopted a wait-and-see attitude; there are many people who directly assist the Communists. There is no persuading these folks; they also hope to survive under Zyuganov. It is only possible to talk tough with such "characters," and the general's statement really implied approximately this: "Either you work for Yeltsin, or you are in for a lot of trouble whatever the outcome of the elections:

In the case of Yeltsin's legitimate victory, the disloyal will simply be fired from their positions; in the event of Zyuganov's possible victory the election results will be annulled and sanctions will be applied against the disloyal just the same." Korzhakov's statement was also targeted in no less a measure at those who, together with Zyuganov, are already looking forward to future rewards and positions: "Comrades, understand. You will be getting nothing. And do not have any illusions so as not to become very disappointed. They will never again let the Communists have power in this country; this experiment is too dangerous."

Did those for whom the general's warning was meant see the point? Most likely they did. Another question is whether they believed that the president's team is really prepared for radical options. Even if they did not quite see the point, I am sure that it will give many a pause to ponder: Is it worthwhile playing ball with Zyuganov, and what might it entail for them? War being what it is, political struggle calls for various methods — including methods of psychological pressure. The general carried out a psychological attack, and this is also necessary. Well, what would really happen if the Communists won? I find this question hard to answer but, honestly, I do not believe that power will be surrendered to them. This is what many people think — including many people among the Zyuganovites. Since such a view exists, it should be consolidated and disseminated. This creates the necessary psychological climate, both for Yeltsin's victory by legitimate means, and for staving off a communist revenge by other methods.

Russia: Anonymous Zyuganov Aide Explains Election 'Compromise'

BR0705144396 Paris LE MONDE in French 7 May 96 p 6

[Report by Jean-Baptiste Naudet: "Person Close to Boris Yeltsin Says He Is 'In Favor' of Postponing Presidential Election in Russia"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow — An "historic compromise," an unheard of cohabitation of "democrats" and Communists, and the cancellation of the first presidential election in Russia since the end of the USSR? As the first round of the presidential election (scheduled for 16 June) approaches, this scenario — at first glance unbelievable — can no longer be necessarily ruled out. [passage omitted]

Officially, the talks have not yet begun even though the Communist leader did agree on Sunday, 5 May to discuss "the country's stability" with Boris Yeltsin. Officially, the two presidential candidates are complying with a request by 13 powerful bosses of major Russian banks and companies — all close to the president — who in late April asked the two men to conclude a mysterious "compromise" in order to avoid "the path leading to civil war and the disintegration of Russia." Officially, there was no more talk of postponing the presidential election, the symbol of Russia's commitment to democracy.

Yet, it would seem that fairly disreputable bargaining is under way. [passage omitted]

Even before the publication of the vague appeal by the 13 businessmen, who are theoretically "enemies" of the Communists, a person close to Gennadiy Zyuganov was strangely familiar with the exact contents of the initiative. He explained it crudely to LE MONDE, asking to remain anonymous: "Yeltsin has tanks and prisons but no popular support. Zyuganov has popular support but no tanks or prisons. Consequently, there is a trend toward compromise in order to prevent a catastrophe." According to this person close to the Communist leader, the "compromise" was the following: "Before the elections, the constitution will be amended to give more power to the [Communist majority] parliament and prime minister. The post of prime minister will go to Gennadiy Zyuganov. At the same time, the president's powers will be scaled back. Yeltsin will stay in the Kremlin and the elections will be canceled." [passage omitted]

Russia: Security Expert Says Election Postponement Unlawful

LD0805101296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0937 GMT 8 May 96

[Commentary by Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 8 (Itar-Tass) — "Social stability and security can be ensured only by observing the laws and the Constitution, including the dates of the elections. According to the Constitution, the source of power in Russia are the people. Therefore, those who move to postpone the elections and refuse to comply with the people's will place themselves outside the law," this view was expressed to Itar-Tass today not by a politician, but by a professional state security expert — Assistant Secretary of the Russian Security Council Vladimir Rubanov.

It is indicative that public statements on the expediency of postponing the presidential elections were lately made not by civilians, but by generals — by Aleksandr Korzhakov, Chief of the Presidential Security Service, and Leontiy Kuznetsov, Commander of the Moscow Military District. On the one hand, the military have enough grounds for anxiety. Remembering the 1991 August putsch and the attempt to stage a coup d'etat in October 1993, the army and the secret services are afraid of being drawn into a confrontation provoked by the existing political elites.

But another aspect of the problem is much more important. Don't the generals realise that any postponement of the elections would place the army and the said services in an even more difficult and equivocal predicament when their oath to the Constitution and the people will become invalid?

In Chechnya, for instance, soldiers usually told journalists that they were defending the country's constitutional integrity when asked what they were fighting for in that republic.

What, if not the Constitution, the society, and the people, would the army and the secret agencies serve if the elections were put off? The answer is quite simple — an unlawful regime. Will the generals, the commanders of military districts, and even the Defence Minister be able to control the army, which will be demoralised by the breach of its oath?

It is pertinent to recall an episode, which occurred in the besieged White House, right in the centre of Moscow, on August 19, 1991. General Aleksandr Lebed called on Boris Yeltsin to tell him that he should assume the status of Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the territory of Russia if he did not want the officers and men to breach their oath by disobeying the decisions of the putsch committee. The Head of the Russian State described this episode in his memoirs "The President's Notes." Yeltsin, who was nationally elected as leader of the country on June 12, 1991, was able to control the army only due to this in the days of the August vacuum of power caused by the split between the President and the Parliament. Will he be able to keep the army under control if he goes beyond the legal constitutional field by postponing the elections?

In the period remaining before the elections, the politicians must not fan up passions by forecasting a split in the Russian society. They must tirelessly explain to their fellow-countrymen, including the military, that order in the country depends on the observance of all the constitutional election procedures.

Russia: Communists Said Preparing To Intimidate Voters at Polling Places

MM0705140996 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 7 May 96 p 2

[Article by Viktor Sokirko: "The Communists Have Devised a Plan — a Plan of a Genius. The Bustle Around the Ballot Boxes Will Resemble the Storming of the Winter Palace With the Subsequent Counting of the Spoils"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There are 40 days left to go before the presidential election on 16 June, and we are already getting rather sick of the word "ballot box." Now though, it turns out, we will not be able to get near the actual ballot boxes — the Communists intend to establish their own special system to monitor the election and to place five independent observers in each (!) polling places.

"Vote how you like, of course, comrade, but don't forget you are being watched." If each of the 11 presidential contenders were to start doubting the electoral commissions' honesty and send his own five-man team to the ballot boxes, how would it work out? Well, it wouldn't. You might simply get a fight among the "monitors" themselves, whose task was to supervise (the sentiments of every such agitator are known — irrespective of whom he favors). The voters will either take fright and scatter or join forces with their own side.

In any event, the Communists' accrual of additional forces would lead to an appropriate response from other large groups backing the remaining presidential candidates. If Gennadiy Zyuganov's actual; plan is to turn the federal election into a blitzkrieg at the ballot box, it is a work of genius.

And of simplicity. The Law on Elections, adopted on the eve of the last elections to the State Duma, enables candidates' agents, independent and international voters [as published — izbirateli — sense suggests observers — nablyudateli], and representatives of the media to be present (who can say how many there would be?). Central Electoral Commission secretary Aleksandr Veshnyakov told KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA that there is provision for the procedure of observing the count and even the right to complain to the court if any violations are discovered. The observer has the right to demand certified copies of electoral commission documents. The Communists took advantage of this — at the Duma elections they obtained information from 90 percent of the polling places. Some times they knew more things and sooner than the commissions' members. Then they analyzed, collated, and drew their conclusions. "There will be no mass malfunctions at the presidential election. They are impossible," Aleksandr Veshnyakov assured us." From the purely technical viewpoint, OK; but how do you assess the moral pressure on a voter when, during voting, he is under the fixed gaze of the five-man team? And while at the 1995 Duma elections the prosecutor's office and Central Electoral Commission turned a blind eye to the illegal activities of some parties, now there is the direct threat of moral terror being used against voters and members of electoral commissions by the aktiv.

These are not empty words — judging by what Gennadiy Zyuganov, Viktor Anpilov, and other Communist leaders have been saying, an "incorrect" count could be bad news for members of electoral commissions. So there has to be a "correct" vote in favor of the "single candidate," and then everything will be OK? It is interesting that presidential candidate G. Zyuganov himself is worried about the possible activities of his supporters: "...the day after tommorow there will be shooting everywhere." Particularly as the Communists' five-man teams of observers are "direct action organs of authority" in embryo. They could easily turn into five-man teams of investigators, magistrates, and so on. We have been through this before — we remember well the "triumvirates."

There is something else that is characteristic of the ballyhoo caused by the Communists over the possible rigging of the election — it is the rating of their representative, Gennadiy Zyuganov. When he was well ahead of Yeltsin, no "suspicions" arose. But now that poll data show that the current president has a real chance of winning the election they have suddenly started talking about rigging.

So a serious choice has to be made: Either not to give a damn or to feel under major moral pressure.

Russia: Inconclusive Second Round of Elections Feared

MM0805101096 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Report by Sergey Chugayev: "Second Round of Presidential Election Could Go On Forever. Sensational Results of 'Excavations' of Law on Presidential Election"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The current Law on the Presidential Election could turn the head of state's election into an endless process. This is the conclusion drawn by the Independent Analysis Group headed by A. Sobyanin, well-known elections expert.

The grounds for this assessment are contained in the final paragraph of the law's Article 56, which runs: "According to the results of a runoff, the per[illegible]n elected is deemed to be the candidate for the post of Russian Federation president who in the voting has obtained the greater number of votes of the voters who took part in the voting in relation to the number of voters' votes cast in favor of the other candidate, provided **that the number of voters' votes cast in favor of this candidate is greater than the number of voters' votes cast against all candidates.**"

Since an absolute number of analysts agree that the presidential election will take place over two rounds, the Independent Analysis Group experts believe that the rule laid down in this part of the law could crucially affect the election's outcome. There is every chance that the second round of voting will prove inconclusive.

There are four generally acknowledged favorites in the current presidential race — B. Yeltsin, G. Zyuganov, V. Zhirinovskiy, and G. Yavlinskiy. Only two of them will reach the second round. But, whatever the most likely "final" pair, Sobyanin's experts are sure that most voters will vote "against all."

If Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy reach the final, centrist and right-wing voters will most likely make this decision. If the pairing is Yeltsin-Yavlinskiy, likewise center-left and left-wing voters . The Yeltsin-Zyuganov pairing does not guarantee a result either.

Thus, the existing Law on the Presidential Election and the real political situation prevailing in Russia are creating substantial preconditions for the election to be declared invalid and the Federation Council to call a repeat election.

According to the law a repeat election must be held no later than four months after the date of the initial election. If we add to this the 15 days which the Central Electoral Commission has after the election in which to announce the official first-round result, plus another 15 days which must elapse from the time the official first-round results are announced to the time the second round of voting is held, plus the time for collating the second-round voting results.... It comes to approximately six months in total. That is, Russian voters have a real chance of finding out their new president's name only by 1 January 1997.

But even this is only if the second round of the runoff is conclusive. But there are no such guarantees. At the same time, under Article 60 of the Law on the Presidential Election the incumbent head of state carries out his duties until his successor takes up his post.

"Will many Russian thinkers' dreams about Russia's spec[illegible] path not take the form of continuous elections of its president?" — this is the question asked in this context by experts in Sobyanin's group.

The editorial office asked L. Lazarev, chief of the Russian Federation Constitutional Court Secretariat Constitutional Law Administration, to comment on the Independent Informational Analysis Group's conclusions.

"The peculiarity of determining the results of a runoff (second round) has been correctly detected: The person elected is deemed to be the candidate for the post of president who has obtained a greater number of votes than his rival, but provided that this number is greater than the number of votes cast against all candidates. Therefore the second-round results depend to a critical degree on which candidates' electorate more successfully overcomes the 'boredom threshold' on the election marathon route.

"If the possible runoff (according to law it should take place approximately in mid-July) proves inconclusive, the first round of a repeat election must be held no later than mid-October. But if the group's experts' forecasts are confirmed, there will be a second round a month later. The law provides no legal means to halt the election marathon and overcome the possible inconclusiveness of votes."

There is only one solution — amend the law. But, as the Russian Federation Constitutional Court has repeatedly stressed, it is impermissible to change the election rules in the process of elections which have already begun. At the same time the repeat election forecast for October will actually be a new election. And this could be held under different rules.

Russia: Moscow Military Commander Says Elections May 'Sow Discord'

LD0705191696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1748 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Interfax) — Leontiy Kuznetsov, commander of the Moscow military region, told Interfax Tuesday that the upcoming presidential elections may turn into political intrigues which will sow discord in Russia, including among the military.

He said that this point of view is shared by many officers in the Moscow military region.

"We repeatedly discussed what the upcoming elections could turn into and always came to the same conclusion that this is the wrong time. The elections may lead to instability, splitting the Russian population into two camps, one against the other, with clenched fists in their pockets, as the popular saying goes," said Kuznetsov.

"When I look at those around the opposition presidential candidates and those who accompany them, it becomes quite clear to me that if they come to power, they will begin settling scores instead of changing the political course. It is obvious now that the situation in the country is stabilizing," he said.

Russian President "Boris Yeltsin has already led the country through the most difficult years and now, when it is clear that Russia is coming out of the crisis, somebody just wants to use the fruit of another person's labor," Kuznetsov said.

Kuznetsov believes that Russian politicians must think twice before holding the elections and make the best decision depending on the situation.

Russia: Regional Editors Comment on Press Role in Election Campaign

MM0805141296 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 8 May 96 p 1

[Report by Sergey Goncharov under the "Local Press on the Eve of Elections" rubric: "Newspaper Politics — A Delicate Matter"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What can we expect from the election race? What processes will it generate in society? What conflicts will it exacerbate? What role is the press destined to play in it? We put these questions to the chief editors of some regional newspapers, who are currently attending a routine seminar in Moscow held on the initiative of the Russian Federation Committee for the Press and ITAR-TASS.

Nikolay Bezrukov, KURSKAYA PRAVDA [Kursk Truth]:

"No one is forcing us to print anything on a compulsory basis. We choose what we think our readers will find interesting. All in all, we must not forget that the election is coinciding with the next subscription campaign, and quite frankly, if we side with a particular candidate, we risk losing subscribers. So we can say without exaggerating that we are on the subscriber's side. As for purely editorial problems, we try to solve them jointly with the local administration, where we always find understanding, rather than through the election campaign. Our slogan is that 16 June is the same as 19 August, because we are trying to persuade readers to approach the issue of how to make their choice in a considered and thoughtful way."

Khuseyn Shadiyev, INGUSHETIYA newspaper:

"Since our region is a 'conflict' zone in itself, then naturally the election will be a kind of catalyst for political antagonism. Part of the population believes that all questions, and primarily the elimination of the consequences of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict, must be settled before the election. Another section, more moderate, believes quite reasonably that we should wait until the election is over, and then appeal to the president with our hopes. This is generating a certain tension in society, but I think that we will successfully avoid extremes."

Dmitriy Yefremov, VOSKRESNAYA GAZETA [Sunday Gazette], Bashkiria:

"Bashkiria is an agricultural republic, and there are heaps of problems in that sphere, but you don't see many attempts to solve them. For our part, because we are an independent publication, we will of course try to use the election campaign to our advantage, but we will approach this very carefully, because we realize that at the present time any careless publication may result in disproportionate consequences. It looks as though we will support candidates from the democratic blocs at the election."

Ivan Malakheyev, URALSKIY RABOCHIY, Yekaterinburg:

"To my mind any newspaper is at the moment a kind of mat on which the candidates in the fight measure their strength against each other. And our task is to ensure that the people are active and choose a worthy president who can continue reform in the country."

Russia: Rates Established for TV, Radio Election Air Time

MK0805112896 Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 8 May 96 p 2

[Report by Andrey Domnich: "Television, Radio Air Time Go Under Hammer"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The VGTRK [All-Russia State Television and Radio Company] held a drawing of lots for the additional air time available for money for the campaign promotion of candidates for Russian Federation president on Russian Radio and Television.

Some candidates, naturally, did not deign to turn up for such a "petty" event. The candidates perhaps see those who were asked to come in their stead as being "clever" at drawing lots. Not all the candidates sent in such people though. At the appointed time, lots were drawn by people sent by Bryntsalov, Yeltsin, Zhirinovskiy, Zyuganov, Yavlinskiy, Lebed, and Vlasov. Gorbachev, Shakkum, Fedorov, and Tuleyev only had people phone to confirm that they, too, are going to buy — no more than that. However, as representatives of the VGTRK election campaign headquarters affirmed, it is not too late to do this, but the candidates will have to choose from what is left after the drawing, or from air time the radio company would rather use itself.

The following was up for grabs for the period between 20 May and 14 June: 40 minutes on the second nationwide Russian channel for four 10-minute appearances — two by presidential candidates ($10,000 to $12,000 per minute) and two by their campaign teams ($5,000 to $9,000 per minute) in the evening and morning, with the possibility of including political promotional tapes constituting up to 10 percent of the total [air] time. There is no limit on time that can be had for money! This is, in particular, what Mr. Yavlinskiy's pressure group wanted to do — it was represented at the drawing of lots by two likable women. One minute of a political address on "Rossiyskiye Universitety" is $1,000, and it is $1,200 to $3,000 per minute to run a promotion tape. Also auctioned were four slots on the "Ot Pervogo Litsa" program of "Radio Rossii" — two for candidates and the same number for campaign teams (at $700 per minute). To run a political promotional tape costs, correspondingly, $1,080 per broadcast minute.

Presidential candidates informed their official campaign representatives that, having learned from bitter experience, the VGTRK now insists on the "pay now, play later" principle, because the experience of previous election campaigns demonstrated a total lack of scruples in some politicians; they used forged documents, cited nonexistent accounts and banks, and showed forged pay chits. As a result, a certain Masha Moiseyeva — a VGTRK commercial service representative — is still trying to get them pay through the courts. Hence, all the money due for air time is supposed to be in the VGTRK's bank account by 17 May. Otherwise it will simply be sold to rivals or used for [regular] television broadcasts.

CIS: CIS Military Integration Processes Viewed

MM0805084796 Moscow DOM I OTECHESTVO in Russian 7-12 May 96 p iii

[Article by Army General Viktor Samsonov, chief of the Staff for the Coordination of CIS Military Cooperation: "Our Armies Will Be Friends"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is a great deal of talk today about the progress of military integration processes and the prospects for the creation of a collective security system for the CIS states.

It can hardly be denied that military force is one of the main resources of foreign policy and a highly important means of channeling the course of political events in the desired direction. It is easy to see the truth of this idea. A struggle for power — in other words for the right to dominate the world, a continent, or a region by controlling the resources available there — is increasingly manifest in the strategic courses of influential global and regional centers of power.

The world community is experiencing a kind of transitional period in the wake of the global confrontation between the two superpowers and two military-political blocs. In the changed geopolitical situation the United States, other leading Western states, and the North Atlantic alliance have taken a number of steps which objectively create new sources of military danger and pose a potential threat to the security and vital interests of the Commonwealth as a whole and of each CIS state individually. This primarily relates to the problem of NATO's eastward expansion. What is more, such nontraditional transnational threats as international terrorism, gangsterism, drug smuggling, mass migration, and worsening of environmental problems have become a reality today. Ethnic, national, and religious conflicts and lack of protection against information expansion pose a serious threat.

In the face of this growing danger, the CIS states' desire for integration, including military integration, is natural. The stance espoused by the leaders of all the CIS states plays a special role here. The Russian Federation's Strategic Course with the CIS States, approved 14 September last year by edict of Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, marked an important milestone in the deepening of the integration process. It prescribes, in particular, the need to create a collective security system, encourage the intentions of the states party to the Treaty on Collective Security to unite in a defense union based on shared interests and military-political aims, to preserve military infrastructure installations on the basis of mutual accord, and to switch to the principle of joint military basing, while clearly regulating the legal position of bases and servicemen.

Today there is every reason to note that the system of military cooperation which has been created, its normative-legal and scientific-theoretical base, the accumulated experience of peacekeeping, and the foundation of the collective security system which has been laid, are important results of integration within the CIS.

When formulating the collective security system, the Staff for the Coordination of CIS Military Cooperation considers not only the prospects for the development of the Commonwealth but also trends in the development of world military-political processes and current and potential dangers and threats. We also assume the need to cut defense spending for every state, presupposing the use of flexible, varied forms of military cooperation.

Four concepts have already been formulated and adopted, encompassing the main spheres of military cooperation, along with plans for their implementation. They include the Concept for the Collective Security of the States Party to the Treaty on Collective Security, the Concept for the Protection of CIS Airspace, the Concept for the Prevention and Settlement of Conflicts on the Territory of the CIS States, and the Concept for the Protection of Borders.

Practically speaking, the implementation of a series of measures to create the CIS Joint Air Defense System should be deemed a significant result in the development of integration processes. Typically, the agreement on the creation of this system was signed by the heads of the 10 states. This unanimity reflects the real interests of the Commonwealth states.

The sessions of CIS leadership organs in 1995-1996 once again confirmed the Commonwealth states' commitment to further deepening military cooperation on a new level. The Council of Defense Ministers set up the Committee of Chiefs of Staff of the CIS States' Armed Forces at its 27 March 1996 session. Army General M. Kolesnikov, chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff, was approved as the committee's chairman. The committee's priority task is to elaborate a plan for the formation of a Commonwealth security system in the military sphere. It is planned to elaborate the main provisions of the CIS states' coalition strategy, the fundamental principles for the preparation and use of coalition groups of forces, and the geostrategic delimitation [narezka] of collective defense regions. The main emphasis today has been placed on the prevention of armed conflicts in the Commonwealth and on preventive measures to avert them in their early stages. A statute on collective peacekeeping forces in the CIS has been formulated and adopted, which makes it possible to begin forming subunits of such forces as one of the components of a collective security system. A Military-Technical Committee has been formed under the Staff for the Coordination of Military Cooperation. A database of the CIS defense ministries' industrial enterprises has been compiled.

But not everything is going smoothly. That is why clear legal backup for the various tasks being performed is required, along with effective mechanisms for the implementation of the adopted decisions and coordinated approaches on matters pertaining to the security interests of the CIS states. So far the question of formulating a mechanism for joint consultations on coordinating the positions of the member states and on adopting measures in the event of a threat to the security of one or several CIS states remains open.

The creation of any system, let alone a system of collective security, is a complex and multifaceted process. Today we can say that the CIS states and their peoples have a chance of implementing this kind of program within a short period and with good results. Especially since this work is not starting from scratch.

CIS: Paper Publishes Communique of Central Asian Summit

LD0705201296 Tashkent NARODNOYE SLOVO in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Communique following summit of Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev, and Uzbek President Islam Karimov in Bishkek on 6 May]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 6 May 1996, a scheduled meeting of the leaders of the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan examined topical issues involving further development of trilateral cooperation between the fraternal countries under the agreement to establish a single economic space.

The sides told one another about the social, economic, and political situation in their respective countries; exchanged opinions on the state of affairs in the Central Asian region and in the Commonwealth of Independent States; and discussed other international issues of mutual interest.

The presidents approved the draft drawn up by the council of ministers of foreign affairs and council of ministers of defense on additional measures to form a peacekeeping battalion of the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan under UN aegis and on the three founder states of the above Tsentrasbat [Central Asian Battalion], joining the UN reserve forces' agreement.

Particular attention was paid to developing integration processes and implementing joint projects under the program of economic integration by 2000. The presidents noted with satisfaction that trade and economic relations have significantly increased, and implementation of projects envisaged by the program has successfully began. Simultaneously, it was deemed necessary that the council of prime ministers and the executive committee of the interstate council should adopt additional measures to accelerate integration processes, gradually bring the economies of the three Central Asian states closer together, and make effective use of potential for industrial cooperation and mutually beneficial division of labor.

The sides also discussed water and power resources usage in the Central Asian region and emphasized the importance of stepping up the development of new strategies for dividing water resources and finding economic methods of management in this particular field.

A new weekly magazine, called CENTRAL ASIA: PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION has been set up. The purpose of the magazine is to cover in a more objective and comprehensive manner events and the course of reforms and transformations in each founder country and encourage the maintenance and further development of friendly relations and mutual cooperation between the fraternal countries.

The heads of state unanimously agreed that maintaining political stability, gradually carrying out economic reforms and democratic transformations in these Central Asian states, and ensuring constructive cooperation between them on the basis of respecting sovereignty and observing principles of territorial integrity and noninterference in internal affairs is having a positive impact on the situation in the region as a whole, and is a significant contribution toward guaranteeing international security.

The meeting was held in the traditionally warm atmosphere of friendship and complete mutual understanding on all issues discussed.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 8 May

LD0805055496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0454 GMT 8 MAy 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 8 (ITAR-TASS) — Follows a review of Wednesday's Moscow-based Russian newspapers dated May 8. On the eve of Victory Day, the newspapers run articles marking the Victory anniversary and dwelling on the known and unknown pages of the Second World War.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA carries an article about a unique operation which made it possible to transfer Soviet industrial facilities to the Urals by rail despite German air supremacy at the early stages of the war and about the operation of the first radar station near Leningrad in that period.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA runs articles about cemeteries of Soviet soldiers in Germany and a column of reports on how the Victory Day will be celebrated in the republics and regions of the former Soviet Union.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on the difficult post-war life of the forgotten Soviet hero Aleksey Maresyev. "The legend is over," he said with bitterness in an interview with the newspaper on the eve of his 80th birthday.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on Nazi-hunters.

In an article headlined "Nazi-hunters do not leave the frontline," the newspaper describes the tireless efforts of the personnel of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Argentina to track down Nazi war criminals.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on the forthcoming presidential elections in Russia.

The newspaper carries an analytical article headlined "What are the bounds of social compromise?". The newspaper believes that such compromises "at all levels are desirable and even necessary". Conditions for them may be different, "but there is one basic requirement: renunciation of the ideology and actions in the civil-war spirit".

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on the role of local press media in the election campaign.

Chief editors of a number of regional newspapers in a series of interviews express the view about the need "to side with the subscriber", not with any of the presidential candidates.

TRUD on a Russian Economic Forum idea.

A sponsoring group, which brings together representatives of financial, business and administrative circles, addresses their fellow countrymen in an open letter. Their opinion is that the establishment of such a Forum would accord with an "urgent necessity", for the Forum could "consolidate society, map out and suggest ways to get out of the crisis".

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on new details of the murder of journalist Dmitriy Kholodov.

According to Valentin Kovalev, Russian Minister of Justice, the scrutiny of the home-made explosive device has helped investigators to establish not only its technical parameters but also "some qualities and characteristics" of the person who devised it.

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA declares in support of a version that the Russian Defence Ministry had a bearing on the killing of Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev and that the very act of killing was carried out with the use of a high-precision guided missile-and-bombing weapon.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI criticises the legislation-drafting activities of the State Duma, sharing the view of a number of Duma members that "a certain technology of work on draft legislation is already observed. It resembles very much the (Soviet Communist) party methods when assignments are given to several members at once and they are unaware that they do one and the same work."

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on the concept of a system approach to Russia's security problems.

The newspaper carries an interview with Colonel Vladimir Vasiliyev, Candidate of Science (Technology), one of the developers of a concept of a system approach to Russia's security problems. He describes in particular specific methods for exerting psychological and physical influence on terrorists.

TRUD on computer-related crimes in ex-USSR.

The newspaper describes computer-related crimes in ex-Soviet countries, giving data, according to which up to 100,000 people are permanently involved in this sphere of criminal activities. But, considering people, who are drawn into it from time to time, it may be a question of three million specialists, the newspaper points out.

Russia: Yeltsin, Clinton Discuss Relations, International Issues

LD0705150496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1430 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 7 May (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin today discussed over the telephone with U.S. President Bill Clinton some topical issues of Russian-U.S. relations and international issues. The two stressed the need for further progress on some disarmament matters reached at their recent meeting in Moscow. This was reported today by the press service of the Russian head of state.

According to the press service, in the course of the discussion particular emphasis was placed on the need to "ensure success of the review conference on the Conventional Armed Force in Europe Treaty, which begins in Vienna in mid-May."

In bilateral relations, attention was paid, among other things, to "some aspects of economic cooperation," the release from the Russian president's press service notes.

Russia: Yeltsin Sends Personal Messages to Balkan Leaders

LD0705153996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1433 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has sent personal messages to the leaders of Croatia, Bosnia—Herzegovina, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

They will be handed over by First Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, who is touring the republics of former Yugoslavia from May 3 to 10, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing in Moscow on Tuesday.

"The tour is aimed at studying the progress of the Yugoslav settlement and the prospects for the development of bilateral relations with the states of former Yugoslavia," he said.

Karasin also said that Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov plans to visit the republics of former Yugoslavia late in May.

On the eve of Victory Day, in eastern Croatia, Ivanov will lay a wreath at the memorial cemetery of Russian soldiers killed fighting for the liberation of Yugoslavia from fascist occupation.

Russia: Yeltsin, Armenia's Ter-Petrosyan on 'Developing' Ties

LD0705153096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1433 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Interfax) — Russian- Armenian relations are successfully developing in all areas and are about to enter a new phase of strategic partnership, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his Armenian counterpart, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, agreed in the Kremlin Tuesday [7 May].

Stronger relations between the two states are in the interests of the people of both Russia and Armenia, they said.

The two presidents stressed the importance of Russia's efforts toward settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh. Yeltsin hoped that the conflict would be resolved very soon.

Ter-Petrosyan, who made a stop in Moscow on his way home from Beijing, told Yeltsin that China was satisfied with the results of the Russian president's recent visit and attached much importance to it.

For his part, Yeltsin said his visit to China "played a great part in strengthening and developing strategic relations between Russia and China."

Russia: Yeltsin, Ter-Petrosyan Discuss Ties, China

LD0705190596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Anna Kovaleva, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Russian-Armenian links are straightening in every field and reaching the level of strategic partnership. This was the conclusion reached by Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Levon Ter-Petrosyan of Russia and Armenia at their meeting in the Kremlin Tuesday.

Ter-Petrosyan had a stop-over in Moscow on his way from China.

The two presidents said that closer ties between their countries meet the wishes of their peoples.

The presidents noted the importance of Russia's mediating efforts in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Yeltsin expressed the hope that progress will be made in resolving the Karabakh problem.

Ter-Petrosyan told Yeltsin that the Beijing officials are pleased with the results of Yeltsin's recent visit there and regard the visit as important.

Yeltsin believes that his "state visit to China made a significant contribution to consolidation and extension of strategic ties between Russia and China."

Also Tuesday Ter-Petrosyan had a 90-minute meeting with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in which the two men discussed the drafting of a Russian-Armenian Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Aid Treaty.

Ter-Petrosyan told journalists at the end of the talks that only two or three articles of the treaty need final touches. Experts of the two countries are working on the draft, he said.

Ter-Petrosyan said that Chernomyrdin and himself discussed the drafting of other agreements on closer ties between Russia and Armenia and the implementation of documents already signed.

The two men also discussed the forthcoming presidential elections in Russia, Ter-Petrosyan said. He recalled that presidential elections will be held in Armenia, too, on September 21, 1996 and said that at the moment "the power in both countries is held by similar political forces sharing liberal-democratic ideas and so they should support each other."

Ter-Petrosyan said that the agreements on closer integration of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, signed last February, do not quite suit Armenia.

In particular, joining the Customs Union will not bring tangible benefits to Armenia because all transport links with Russia, in particular the railroad through Abkhazia have been cut. Once the traffic is restored, Armenia will have another look at the issue, Ter-Petrosyan said.

Armenia has "very deep integration ties with Russia, especially in the fields of defense and security," he said.

Ter-Petrosyan added that Chernomyrdin plans to visit Armenia in May but the specific date has not been set.

Russia: Zyuganov Stresses 'Social-Democratic Sympathies' in Bonn

MM0705134896 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 7 May 96 p 3

[Report by Yevgeniy Bovkun: "Zyuganov Goes Pink Again in Germany"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bonn — The Russian Communist presidential hopeful was slightly late for dinner with local press representatives and, when he learned whom he would be dealing with, he got upset. "Journalists again, they give me no peace," he told Countess Lambsdorf and other meeting organizers from the "German-Russian Forum" and the German Foreign Policy Society — adding, admittedly, that he was "joking."

The warmth of his reception (he was introduced to those attending as the "most serious contender" for the post of Russian president and even "promoted" to "chairman" of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF]) clearly improved his mood. He complimented the countess and immediately hinted that he was not the "most left-wing" or "most Red" person there — the Russian journalists sitting to the left of him had also been served with red wine.

The first "shot" (fired even before the appetizers) was "bang on target" — a question on the Baltic region. The subject of the Baltic countries' independence is treated with great sensitivity in German.

Recalling his recent interview with DER SPIEGEL, in which he called for "restoration of the borders" of the former Soviet Union, people had thought that they would be hearing some hard-line formulas from the representative of Russia's "coalition of patriotic forces." But Gennadiy Andreyevich talked of the need to observe the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and praised Lithuania and Latvia, where the position of the Russian ethnic minority had improved. It cannot be ruled out that even stubborn Estonia will soon go down the same path.

Our German colleagues were curious as to whether the reforms would be halted in the event of the Communists coming to power, and how in general they intend to run the country. Once again, you could not help recalling G. Zyuganov's recent statements in his DER SPIEGEL and STERN interviews: "We advocate a mixed form of private and state ownership," "the people are not being allowed to work," "we need to halt the selling off of Russia, restore old markets, and protect our own market from foreign goods," "the reforms have done unparalleled damage — worse than World War II," "sham democracy has resulted in mafia power," and "there are more victims in camps today than there were under Stalin."

At the Bristol Hotel, the presidential hopeful announced that markets have been going for 7,000 years. Since there have been commodity and money relations, this means that there were market relations too. In the Soviet Union the market was restricted and tightly regulated. But a clever "Communist" government will pursue a mixed policy.

The Communists have completed the preparation of their economic strategy, he added, and may publish a corresponding document in mid-May on which experts from the country's "five top scientific schools" have been working. The Duma has already been familiarized with the foundations of their economic concept, and the people's masses will soon be enlightened as well.

Writing in the newspaper FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, political scientist Professor Timmerman called the CPRF program contradictory and eclectic. I asked Gennadiy Andreyevich in this connection to what extent his electoral program is based on CPRF principles and how he plans to turn its "minimum" into the "maximum."

We are very happy that our program is being read in IZVESTIYA, quoted on television, and even discussed by professors in Germany, he noted. The party of power has been in power for five years and has not even formed the smallest party for itself, whereas the CPRF is in line with European standards, operates strictly within the law, and recognizes the mixed economy and democratic forms of the organization of life.

The Communist leader was stressing his social-democratic sympathies on this occasion, but they sometimes find themselves in strange company. In the STERN interview, calling W. Brandt his ideal and praising O. Lafontaine, the current chairman of the Social Democratic Party with whom he talked in Moscow, as a "good fellow," Zyuganov added that he also uses al-Nasir and Castro as his models (on another occasion he mentioned Alexander III and Lenin).

Admittedly, on this occasion the "good fellow" Lafontaine was careful not to meet with him. Nor could the federal chancellor find time to talk with the presidential hopeful, probably recalling Gennadiy Zyuganov's statement: "There will come a time when Kohl will not like to remember the close relationship he had with Yeltsin."

Russia: UK Foreign Office Not 'To Act Imprudently' Over Diplomats

LD0705113496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0955 GMT 7 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Olga Semenova]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow, 7 May — Andrew Wood, the British Ambassador to Moscow, has been passed a list of nine British agents who have worked under diplomatic cover and have been declared persona non grata, Aleksandr Zdanovich, acting chief of the Public Relations Center of the Russian Federal Security Service, told this ITAR-TASS correspondent today. [passage omitted]

For his part, an official representative of the British Foreign Office told the ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Polskiy in Birmingham: "In this situation we would not like to act imprudently and are waiting to see what actions Moscow takes on this score." He said that so far the Foreign Office does not have any new information concerning the arrest of the Russian citizen suspected of espionage for Britain.

Russia: Spokesman: 'Talk is About Career Spies, Not Diplomats'

LD0705113396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1102 GMT 7 May 96

[By Olga Semenova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — Spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Grigoriy Karasin told Itar-Tass he had no information about an official order to expel nine British diplomats as spies working on the cover of the British embassy in Moscow.

Karasin was speaking after Russian Federal Security Service [FSB] spokesman AleKSandr Zdanovich told Tass that a message handed over to the British Ambassador in Moscow contained "detailed information about the activities of each of the nine intelligence officers and documentary proof of their contacts with the Russian citizen arrested for spying for Great Britain".

"The talk is about career spies, not diplomats. All of them have been completely exposed, including in the testimony by the detained agent — a Russian citizen — who was caught red-handed," Zdanovich said.

He stressed that the decision to expel "the spies working under diplomatic cover was taken on the basis of a thorough check of the materials submitted by the counterintelligence service."

He explained that the Russian spy had been seized in April but it took time to thoroughly check his testimony and "a diplomatic demarche was made only now after the data obtained by the FSB was examined by the Russian leadership".

Zdanovich refused to say whether there were other diplomats working as spies under the cover of the British embassy.

"Expelled are only those who are in any way connected with the case of the arrested spy who handed over political and military-strategic information", the spokesman said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigory Karasin said it was necessary to "avoid unnecessary emotions and hasty decisions" when asked by Itar-Tass to comment on the possible consequences of the incident.

"It is the main thing now for representatives of Britain and Russia to take guidance from common sense and not to allow the incident to do harm to the successfully developing Russo-British relations," Karasin said.

An official of the British Foreign Office told Itar-Tass in Birmingham that Britain would prefer to act with all necessary circumspection and was awaiting for Moscow's official reaction to the incident. He said the Foreign Office had no new information relating to the arrest of the Russian citizen on suspicion of spying for Britain.

Reports from London said British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind warned about the possible "significant response" to Moscow's expected steps in the wake of the new spy story breaking.

Russia: Federal Security Service Comments on Relations With UK

LD0705172196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Spokesmen for the power structures are adding [to the arrest of a suspected British spy]. We learned fresh details today in the Federal Security Service.

[Begin recording] [Aleksandr Zdanovich, head of the Federal Security Service Public Relations Center — identified by caption] I can tell you for certain that the investigation has irrefutable information in regard to each of the diplomats who, under the cover of diplomatic status, carried out intelligence work on the territory of Russia.

[Unidentified correspondent] How many is it intended...

[Zdanovich, inerrupting] I would not like to talk about numbers, because it is probably better for you to ask the British Embassy. They know precisely there. The ambassador was given specific facts and a specific list of names of those caught red-handed in this activity.

[Correspondent] Do you not think that expelling British diplomats might complicate Russo-British relations? Do you anticipate retaliatory sanctions on the part of the British against our...

[Zdanovich, interrupting] I think that everything done on a legitimate basis by the counterintelligence service — which exists in every country, and defends the interests of its country... [pauses] Therefore, I think there are no grounds here for linking specific actions by the counterintelligence service or intelligence service with the general content or with trends for development of interstate relations. [end recording]

Russia: Ministry 'Anxiously Expecting' Retaliatory Measures From UK

LD0705211796 Moscow NTV in Russian 1800 GMT 7 May 96

[Report by Sergey Gaponov; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Journalists came to a briefing at the Russian Foreign Ministry today to hear from Grigoriy Karasin, Press and Information Department head, the details of the affair of the British spies in Moscow. [passage omitted]

It is reported from London that there is no particular panic in the Russian Federation Embassy over the incident. However, the Russian Foreign Ministry is evidently anxiously expecting retaliatory measures from the British. Nobody has any doubt that there will be some. British Foreign Minister Malcolm Rifkind has announced that adequate measures will be taken. Officials in the British foreign policy department think that three or four people could be expelled from Russia, but there are reports that British Ambassador Andrew Wood has been given a much longer list of names of his subordinates and a description of their intelligence activities.

In an interview to our television company, Aleksandr Zdanovich, acting head of the Federal Security Service Public Affairs Center, declared that there could be retaliatory expulsions of our diplomats from Great Britain. However, these will differ from the action of the Russian special services and Foreign Ministry in regard to the Britons — first and foremost because London has no evidence indicating espionage activities of Russian diplomats in Britain, whereas the Federal Security Service has no grounds to doubt that the British Embassy staffers named on Andrew Wood's list are intelligence agents.

[Begin Zdanovich recording] I can tell you for certain that the investigation has irrefutable information in regard to each of the diplomats who, under the cover of diplomatic status, carried out intelligence work on the territory of Russia. [end recording]

Regarding some mass media comments that the stepping up of activities by the Russian special services is connected with the political situation in the country and the imminent presidential elections, Zdanovich declared that these are conjectures and, quite on the contrary, the incident with the British spy could indicate a stepping up of the activities of foreign intelligence agents working in Russia, a stepping up connected precisely with the political situation in the country. The Russian special services, however, are simply doing their job.

At the same time, one cannot fail to note assertions by the British, that one third of the staffers of their special services are engaged in neutralizing Russian intelligence agents on the shores of foggy Albion.

Meanwhile, today, after 10 days have expired since the Russian citizen was taken into custody, he was charged, as Federal Security Service officials said, under Article 64 with betrayal of the motherland in the form of espionage.

Russia: Primakov Comments on Talks With South Korean Counterpart

LD0705192796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1144 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow, 7 May — Russia does not want to be pushed aside, as the situation on the Korean peninsula is being settled, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov said today after talks with his South Korean colleague Kong No-myong. At a joint news conference, Yevgeniy Primakov confirmed Russia's position in favor of lasting peace and her concern to see stability in that region.

"We do not intend to prevent the settlement processes that can develop on the peninsula. On the contrary, we are ready to help them in every way," the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

The situation in Korea was at the center of the talks, in particular the latest attempts by North Korea to change unilaterally the existing mechanism for reconciliation. [passage omitted]

The minister stressed that the Korean peninsula is an important priority in Russia's foreign policy, since it is situated near the Russian borders. The Russian side expressed concern over the current development of the situation in Korea. The nonviolation of the truce is no doubt one of the aims pursued by Russia, Primakov stressed. Russia has the opportunity and potential to help the peaceful settlement of the Korean problem and this point of view was received with understanding by Kong No-myong, he said. The format of the quadripartite meeting could be expanded by including Russia, he said, as Moscow advocates lasting peace which can be enshrined in an appropriate treaty between two Koreas, the Russian minister said.

Yevgeniy Primakov said relations between Moscow and Seoul were "quite developed." He said there are problems too, but they are "growing pains." "Relations with South Korea are dear to us," he said. The minister said that at the same time Moscow supported relations with North Korea, but it has never used and does not use its relations with one part of the peninsula against the other.

Kong No-myong stressed that he had asked Yevgeniy Primakov to treat with understanding the initiative of holding quadripartite talks. He said that even if a many-sided dialogue does take place without Russia, her position will still be taken into account, and appropriate consultations will be held with her. He said that Russia's participation in a larger-scale discussion of security issues in North-East Asia was natural. South Korea voiced its support for the idea of Russia's participation in the consortium "Organization to help the development of power engineering in Korea," set up to supply nuclear light-water reactors to North Korea.

Russia: Foreign Minister To Go to Caucasus To Settle Conflicts

LD0705174996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1550 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Interfax) - The main goal of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's trip to the South Caucasian republics of the CIS, beginning May 8, is to promote the settlement of the festering conflicts in the region, a high-ranking Russian diplomat told Interfax Tuesday.

Primakov is to arrive in Baku Wednesday [8 May] for talks with the Azerbaijani leaders on ways of settling the Karabakh conflict.

The same problem will be discussed in Yerevan where he is to arrive on the evening of May 8. With the Armenian leaders Primakov will also discuss the draft treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding between Russia and Armenia.

On May 9, Primakov is to go to Stepanakert, the administrative center of Nagorno-Karabakh, head of the Armenian Foreign Ministry's press center, Armen Bagdasaryan, told Interfax. From Stepanakert Primakov will return to Yerevan.

The Russian Embassy in Azerbaijan reports that from Yerevan Primakov is likely to travel back to Baku.

On the evening of May 10 or morning of May 11 Primakov is expected to arrive in Tbilisi, the press secretary of the Russian embassy in Georgia, Aleksey Savinskiy, told Interfax.

A high-ranking Georgian diplomat told Interfax that during a one-day visit to Tbilisi Primakov will meet with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and Foreign Minister Irakly Menagarishvili to discuss bilateral relations and the settlement of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Sources in the Russian Foreign Ministry report that Primakov's trip to the Caucasus might have been timed to coincide with the exchange of POWs between the conflicting parties.

Russia: Russia Opposes Move To Limit Tanker Traffic in Bosporus

LD0805090296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0829 GMT 8 May 96

[By Igor Ivantsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 8 (Itar-Tass) — A spokesman for the Russian Fuel and Energy Ministry told Itar-Tass today that it was necessary to create a modern system of navigation in the Bosporus and Dardanelles, rather than limit the number of oil tankers going through. He spoke in the wake of a statement made by Turkish Foreign Minister Emre Gonensay who urged to impede transportation of Kazakh oil through the area of Black sea straits.

Recently, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the construction of a new oil pipeline by the Caspian Pipeline Consortium for the transportation of oil from Kazakhstan across a sea terminal in Novorossiysk, where oil will be taken aboard large oil tankers and delivered to Western consumers via the Bosporus and Dardanelles.

The spokesman said that it was not the first time that Turkey attempted to restrict navigation across the Black sea straits. In 1994, Turkey unilaterally and in violation of the 1936 Montreux International Convention imposed the so-called "regulations" on navigation through the Black sea straits. Although this problem was repeatedly raised at international conferences Turkey invariably referred to a possible threat of an ecological calamity in the event of an accident on board an oil tanker passing the strait zone.

The majority of international observers believe that this was the pretext Turkey had used in a bid to put pressure and persuade the interested sides to build an oil pipeline across the Turkish territory. Conclusions made by independent experts proved that arguments offered by Turkey were unsubstantiated. An inquiry into the problem made by independent experts showed the absence of elementary navigation equipment in the straits, disregard for rules of navigation, poor technical maintenance of the majority of ships and lax discipline. If these problems are removed, an increase in the number of ships passing through the straits will not create any additional hazard, experts said. In perspective, the amount of oil transported through the straits is expected to exceed the present level twice, which experts believe to be quite possible.

Touching upon concrete ways of resolving this problem, the spokesman said that a proposal to create a modern navigation system in the straits had already been discussed at an international level. The construction of such navigation system should be carried out with the participation of all user-countries on a share basis, the spokesman said.

Russia: Azeri Prosecutor Negotiating Extradition of Ex-President

LD0705213596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1736 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — Azerbaijan's prosecutor-general Eldar Hasanov, now in Moscow, today held consultations with Russian law authorities on extradition of Azerbaijan's former president Ayaz Mutalibov.

A spokesman for the Azeri Embassy in Moscow has confirmed this to Itar-Tass, but declined to specify with whom Hasanov is negotiating.

The embassy official said he did not know whether Hasanov had come with any new evidence of Mutalibov's plotting two coups, of which he had been charged in Azerbaijan.

The spokesman stressed that Hasanov's mission "has a confidential character".

Mutalibov, 57, was president of Azerbaijan from May of 1990 to March of 1992. He was taken in custody by Russian security services in Moscow on April 11.

Because of complaints depicting heart attack, he was moved to a hospital, where he remains now.

Russian Prosecutor Yuriy Skuratov had told Itar-Tass before the arrival of Hasanov in Moscow that "the Azeri side has not submitted additional information" required for extradition of Mutalibov.

The final decision on him has to be made by May 12, which ends one month limit of custody laid down by law. Skuratov said the decision would be made by the deadline "in any case".

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Marks Anniversary of End of World War II

LD0805091196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0700 GMT 8 May 96

[Video report from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Millions of Soviet soldiers sacrificed their lives for victory [in World War II], thousands were missing in action. Today, on the eve of Victory Day, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Chairman of the Government Viktor Chernomyrdin laid wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow. The ceremony was attended by members of the Russian Government and the leadership of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as by Moscow city leaders.

After inspecting an honor guard, Boris Yeltsin bowed before the memorial plaques of the hero-cities by the Kremlin Wall. [Video shows Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin laying wreaths, other dignitaries in attendance; Yeltsin speaking, the Eternal Flame by the Kremlin Wall behind him]

[Begin Yeltsin recording] Dear compatriots: Tomorrow we mark the 51st anniversary of victory, the great victory. It was the most important, the most decisive victory in Russia's history.

The longer the time that has passed since the event, the clearer its meaning becomes, the clearer the importance of the feat achieved by our people. The soldiers of victory succeeded in defending the right to life of the 1,000-year-old Russian state and many states of the world. They succeeded in defending the right to the future of the people of this country and of many peoples in the world. The soldiers of victory saved Russian and world culture from destruction.

Years and centuries later, our people will honor and hold as sacred the exploits of the wartime generation — those who fought on the Great Patriotic War fronts, those who were part of the resistance movement, those who carried out their military duty abroad, and those who worked selflessly on the home front, who suffered hunger and cold, giving their all to the front and to future victory.

Here, by the Eternal Flame, we remember those who were killed in action, tortured to death after being taken prisoner, burned alive in the furnaces of concentration camps, and those who died from the hardships of wartime life. Through the decades, coming from there, from the battlefields, we can hear the voice of the commander urging his troops into the last attack, the call of the political instructor diverting fire on to himself. Through the decades we can see the infantryman's desperate lunge at the machine-gun and the tears of the mother receiving the notification that her son has been killed in action.

There were many of them, those who gave their lives for the motherland. We remember them all. May their memory last forever.

Eternal glory to those who gave their lives to win the truly priceless victory in 1945, who saved mankind from fascist hell. We bow down low before our older generation, before those who carried the burden of war and the postwar destruction. Society and the state are indebted to you, to those who were killed, and to those who survived.

The bleak truth of war demands that we should remember the defeats of the first months of the war, the retreat of 1942. No monuments were erected to the soldiers who were killed then. But they too were fighting for their motherland. It makes one bitter to say it, but even now not all those who were killed have been laid to rest. This is my pain, the pain of many of our compatriots. Our common duty is to give a proper burial to the soldiers of the Great Patriotic War, to complete this noble task.

The truth is implacable. It also demands that we should remember those who, having survived the torments when taken prisoner by Hitler's troops, were later sent to the gulag [labor camp]. This too happened on our soil.

Today I would also like to mention the widows of the Great Patriotic War. I know how difficult life was for the families of those killed in action, how mothers strained themselves to breaking point to bring up their children, to give them a proper education. We bow down low before you, wartime widows.

Dear friends, the great victory was won in springtime, the most beautiful of all seasons. While celebrating another anniversary, we can see another confirmation of the inexhaustible strength of Russia and its people. We bow down before the heroic deeds of our fathers and grandfathers. The fight for victory, one victory for all, brought us together into one family. Every time we celebrate 9 May we feel common joy and common grief.

Russia's entire history convinces us that it is only together that we can overcome the ordeals that befall us. When people unite for the sake of a great goal they cannot be defeated. This was true during the Great Patriotic War, and I am sure it will be true now as well.

Victory Day is a sacred day for us. This is why on this day I badly want us to be together, regardless of our political sympathies and views. Glory to the victorious soldier! We bow down low before you, dear veterans! Peace and happiness be with every family, with every citizen of Russia! Happy Victory Day to you! [end recording]

Russia: 'Excerpts' of Book on Yeltsin's Health, Work, Family Revealed

LD0705191296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Anna Kovaleva, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [no dateline as received] The All-Russian Movement of Public Support for Boris Yeltsin is about to publish a book, 57 Questions to Russian President. Interfax obtained an exclusive right to let its subscribers have an insight into the book before its publication.

The head of the Russian state answers questions, occasionally tricky and incisive, about the situation in the country, his political and human likes and dislikes, relations with his entourage and plans.

The Presidential Bulletin is publishing excerpts from the book on the president's family life, his temper, hobbies and human attachments.

Family

I was born in the village of Butka, Talitsa district, Sverdlovsk region, to a peasant family on February 1, 1931. Nearly all my ancestors lived in that village.

My mother was Klavdiya Vasilyevna, my father Nikolay Ignatyevich Yeltsin. I was the elder child. I have a brother, Mikhail, and a sister, Valentina.

My wife is Naina (Anastasiya), nee Girina, born to a peasant family. She graduated the Urals Polytechnic Institute as a civil engineer.

I have two daughters. The elder, Yelena, was born in 1957 and graduated [from] the Urals Polytechnic Institute. Tatiana was born in 1960 and graduated [from] the Moscow State University.

I have four grandchildren, Katya, Masha, Boris and Gleb.

This is a usual family, a wife, children and grandchildren. They don't walk on tiptoes around the president but I am touched by the desire of both the grown-ups and small children to create an atmosphere of warmth and love around me. This is thanks to Naina and the daughters, of course.

My wife feels who is my friend and who is my foe, what is the logic of the decisions I may and responds, as a rule, in a very restrained way.

As becomes the head of state, I am accompanied by my wife on my foreign visits. Naina never tries to act as a political figure, never interferes in the political or offers political advice. Her program during foreign tours covers the problems of the family, motherhood and childhood. She intuitively felt what she should and should not be like. Naina remains herself and I like it very much.

Temper

I believe I am one of those Russians to whom it is important to show continuously that they are physically strong, who work to the point of exhaustion and try to overcome all problems.

I cannot organically stand an atmosphere of terror, account settling or witch-hunting. It is important for me to feel that I am surrounded by normal people.

I never liked bad language and never use dirty words.

What I am sure of is that if one feels danger, anxiety or internal discomfort, one should plan thoroughly and act decisively.

When I evaluate the situation, I leave aside all successes and concentrate on my shortcomings and errors. The analysis of errors has a stimulating effect on me.

My tactics is to work for the final result.

I do not call for a new revolution to which everything should be sacrificed or try to relinquish what has been done before.

Yes, I am a very anxious president but my final goal is Russia's quiet.

First Year After Graduation

I graduated the Urals Polytechnic Institute as a civil engineer.

Once I defended my diploma thesis, the position of a foreman in construction of industrial installations was offered to me. I refused because I felt that to manage construction without having done everything with one's own hands would be a grave error.

I worked as a bricklayer, concrete placing worker, carpenter, joiner. Plasterer, tower crane operator, etc. For a year.

After that I told the construction area chief that I was prepared to work as foreman.

Presidency Is Pretty Lonely

Russia has always been said to be "large and rich but lacking order." The president's chief preoccupation is to keep Russia large and rich, take care of its people and maintain law and order in the country.

... The everyday life is work, meetings, papers, visits, receptions, appointments, a host of large and small matters to attend to.

The other side of the president's job is disruption of normal human life. Furthermore, the president can be corrupted and corrupt others. And what is not widely reported, the man at the top has, as rule, no close friends. One acquires the syndrome of "closeness," one becomes extremely cautious in dealing with people.

The president effectively cannot do much of what he would do in usual life.

One remedy is to meet people, to have direct contacts with real life. They "charge" one with energy. For this reason I often depart from the official schedule and go out to the people.

I like it very much to be among the people, see smiles of understanding and feel support. I know that some are cynical about my "meeting the people" and think it is posing. But it is at these meeting that I find what the people feel, their griefs ad hopes. Is there any other way to know it.

My Own Time

I am fond of cold water in forest lakes and rivers with water from springs.

I love sports. I am going in for sports and made a lot of friends and acquaintances do the same. I made nearly everybody in the Sverdlovsk Regional Party Committee play volleyball. In Moscow I used the same coercion techniques. I had a presidential tennis tournament organized to have everybody playing.

Incomes and Property

My wages in 1995 totaled 26,784,596 rubles, I paid a total of 4,309,216 rubles as taxes.

I have no hard currency earnings.

I have a country house and a car of my own. My wife and I gave our privatization vouchers to our children and have seen no dividends on them. I have no other securities or shares.

I have no deposits in foreign banks or property abroad. My children and grandchildren never studied abroad.

My Health

To say that I abuse alcohol would be untrue. To say that I do not drink at all would not be convincing. People would doubt it and say: "What kind of Russian man are you if you cannot drink." So I would say that I can drink but do not overdo it.

I had a lot of unpleasant adventures in my life. I was in accidents with nearly every kind of vehicles, planes, helicopters, cars, a train and once when I was a child, with a horse.

My family reproach me for taking everything to my heart. This is not noticeable initially but when concerns accumulate, the load makes itself felt.

Large emotional and physical stresses brought me to hospital last year but the doctors put me right fast. Now I do not have time to remember my ills as I work from five in the morning until late into the night.

All my grandfathers and great grandfathers lived past 90. They did not merely drag on, they worked, ploughed and managed large families. Compared to them I am pretty green.

Russia: Yeltsin Approves Payments to Russian Veterans in Baltic States

MM0805103396 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 8 May 96 p 1

[Edict No. 648 of the Russian Federation President "On a One-Shot Payment to Invalids and Participants in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, Living Permanently in the Latvian Republic, the Lithuanian Republic, and the Estonian Republic," signed by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, on 6 May 1996]

[FBIS Translated Text] In connection with the approaching 51st anniversary of the Victory in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, **I decree:**

1. That the initiative of the Foundation for the 50th Anniversary of the Victory to make a one-shot payment in May-June 1996 to invalids and participants in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War who live permanently in the Latvian Republic, the Lithuanian Republic, and the Estonian Republic out of the funds of the Foundation for the 50th Anniversary of the Victory and composed of one minimum old-age pension as established by Russian Federation legislation as of 1 January 1996, be approved.

2. That the Russian Federation Government is to assist the Foundation for the 50th Anniversary of the Victory

in organizing the execution of the aforesaid monetary payments.

[signed] Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin

[dated] Moscow, the Kremlin, 6 May 1996
No. 648.

Russia: Yeltsin Edicts Issued 'To Defend' Interests of Peasantry

LD0705201896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1433 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHELYABINSK, Russia, May 7 (Interfax) — Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zaveryukha Tuesday said President Boris Yeltsin's two latest decrees ordering measures to step up agricultural production and give a boost to agricultural reforms were designed not to promote Yeltsin's current presidential election campaign but to defend "the interests of the peasantry."

The March 7 decree on land tenure rights and the April 16 one on measures to stabilize the "agroindustrial complex" — agriculture and related industries — and speed up reforms in this area make it possible "not only to carry through the sowing season in an organized way but open up an opportunity seriously to improve the state of affairs in the agroindustrial complex," Zaveryukha, currently on a visit to the Urals, told Interfax.

He said Russian agriculture had cut its output by 33 percent over the past five years and by 8 percent in 1995 alone. "Under such circumstances, things can't be put right at a stroke, but the measures the decrees provide for make it a realistic task to stabilize the agroindustrial complex even in 1996," he said.

Unlike his former fellow members of the Agrarian Party, in which he suspended his membership for his "whole period of work in the government," Zaveryukha argued that only the April 16 decree could provide "certain financial stability" in the agroindustrial complex. The decree defers the repayment of loans taken by farms between 1992 and 1998 until the year 2005. These loans total more than 21 trillion rubles. The measure also defers a 5.1 trillion ruble "commodity loan" issued in 1995 until 1998.

Russia: Agrarian Party Criticizes Yeltsin Comments on Land Law

LD0605184096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1516 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 6 (Interfax) — The Agrarian deputies' group (37 mandates) and leader of the Agrarian Party Mikhail Lapshin have criticized Russian President Boris Yeltsin's remarks on the Law on the Peculiarities of Implementing the Citizens' Constitutional Right to Land Ownership, approved by the State Duma in the first reading on April 3, 1996.

The president's statement to the effect that the draft law did not comply with the constitution was unfounded, Lapshin told Interfax Monday. "Boris Yeltsin has the habit of quoting the constitution when he lacks other arguments in support of his position," he said. "Meanwhile, he easily departs from the constitution, as was the case with the presidential decree of March 7 'On the Implementation of the Citizens' Constitutional Right to Land Ownership' which introduces vouchers and the selling of farmland," he added.

As for the draft law considered by the Duma and the draft Land Code already approved by the deputies in two readings, they are aimed at preventing an uncontrollable sale of farmland that could lead Russia to catastrophe, said Lapshin.

By contrast, Minister of Justice Valentin Kovalev told a press conference in answer to an Interfax question that the presidential decree, contested by the deputies, "is a forced measure of legal regulation of land relations that may prevent anarchy in the country."

In response to the criticism expressed by the opposition, he said that this criticism is caused either by "deliberate misinformation, or by the failure to understand that whoever owns land in Russia, [the land] remains part of Russian territory."

"Nothing awful will happen even if individual plots of land are bought by foreigners," said Kovalev. "Foreigners are not allowed to use farmland for purposes other than agricultural. Moreover, if they buy land, the inflow of investments will undoubtedly increase," he added.

Russia: President's Human Rights Commission Issues Report

MM0805120896 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI "Political Wednesday" Supplement in Russian 8 May 96 p iii

[Report by Dmitriy Orlov: "Our Rights Come From the Constitution, Not From Officials"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The President's Human Rights Commission has prepared a report on the situation regarding the legislative regulation and the actual observance of civil rights and freedoms in 1994-1995.

The act of deference by the commission's members toward the legislature and the executive — the positive assessment, in terms of progress toward the rule-of-law state, of the new Civil Code, the laws "On the procedure for Exit from the Russian Federation..." and "On Assemblies, Rallies, Demonstrations, and Pickets," as well as the Federal Migration Program and the Fundamental Guidelines of state policy on support for fellow countrymen abroad and a number of other normative acts — mitigates only slightly the generally negative assessment of the situation. The State Duma's avowed intention of bringing Russian legislation into line with the Council of Europe's standards, the commission believes, "remains largely unrealized." But it is not only "certain trends in legislative activity which attest to the revision of... the Constitution." Article 19 of the Fundamental Law prescribes that rights and freedoms must operate directly. However, the absence of a mechanism for their implementation — our age-old Achilles' heel — means that these rights "remain no more than declarations." At the same time the operation of the new laws (the Civil Code and the Criminal Code) is in practice blocked by the old ones (the Code of Civil Procedure and the Code of Criminal Procedure), as ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI has already written a number of times.

Russia's admission to the Council of Europe has not yet influenced the development of human rights legislation in the spirit of the 1948 Universal Declaration and other international documents signed and ratified by Russia. In particular, the death penalty still exists in this country (in contravention of Article 1 of Protocol No. 6 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights). This is justified by reference to the protection of Russia's national interests (the level of serious crime is indeed very high) although in this instance such arguments are hardly appropriate: The death penalty is not like a customs tariff.

The same arguments, albeit now known as the "regional specific," are cited with regard to the right to freedom of movement and choice of place of residence in Moscow and Moscow Oblast, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar and Stavropol Krays, Vladimir and Voronezh Oblasts, and a number of other regions. As is well known, the case of the correspondence of regional acts on the registration of the Russian Federation Constitution to Russian legislation and the country's international obligations has been examined in the Constitutional Court. However, its verdict has not yet influenced the actual state of affairs.

In Russia, the President's Human Rights Commission believes, the situation now is that there is a "discrepancy between the constitutional model and the actual situation on the observance of freedom of speech." And even though there have been few outright and flagrant violations, access to information is limited which, as the report's authors figuratively put it, creates an "internal hermetic seal" within certain ministries and departments. In accordance with the laws "On State Secrets" and "On Security" (which, in the opinion of the President's Human Rights Commission, contain extended and legally incorrect definitions) a list has been approved which empowers 42 top officials, primarily the leaders of ministries and departments, to determine which information constitutes a state secret. They actively use this right, making it difficult, for example, to obtain information on the observance of nuclear and radiation safety.

On 1 December 1995 there were over 1 million Russians in remand centers and prisons. One Russian in every 150. If you take into account the decline in the country's population in recent years the ratio could even more daunting. However, the main tragedy is not the number of prisoners or even the increase in the prison population compared with previous years. A situation has developed in penitentiary institutions, the Human Rights Commission believes, which is characterized by a "decline in the level of food, sanitary, and medical provision for detainees, constant and widespread human rights violations, and non-observance of the generally recognized principles of morality and humanism." There have been frequent cases of beatings in prison, violence by fellow inmates, and diseases resulting from bad sanitary conditions.

Of course, it is not easy to answer the question "What is to be done?" about the facts cited in the Human Rights Commission's report. The fact that we have no practical answer to this question is a major shortcoming on the part of our main state defenders of human rights. It is easy to accuse the federal leadership of disregarding the protection of citizens' rights and legitimate interests but it is considerably harder to find concrete remedies and elaborate detailed recommendations for the solution of problems in each specific area.

Finally, citizens themselves must be more resolute in the defense of their rights which are not in the gift of individual officials but belong to them in accordance with the Russian Constitution. In many instances the violation of those rights is so flagrant (for example, registration procedures, harassment in the army, or infringements of freedom of speech) that a court investigation would not be unduly difficult. In short, what is needed is the will — both individual and political.

Russia: Dropping of Deputies' Submissions 'Dangerous Precedent'

MM0705134296 Moscow EKSPRESS-KHRONIKA in Russian 4 May 96 p 1

[Article by Lev Levinson: "Verging on the Absurd"; received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Constitutional Court 19 April plenum decree on the removal from examination of two submissions from State Duma deputies is a milestone in the history of Russian law. The change which this decree makes to the very foundations of legislation turns the state's legal system into a mirage which could melt away at the wave of an ordinary Russian citizen's hand.

In December last year within the established procedure one fifth of the total number of deputies of the State Duma of the first convocation (that is 90 deputies) sent submissions to the Constitutional Court regarding the compliance with the Constitution of regional laws restricting freedom of conscience and religion. Doubt was cast on the Tula Oblast law "on missionary (religious) activity on the territory of Tula Oblast" and the Tyumen Oblast law "on missionary activity by foreign religious missions (missionaries) on the territory of Tyumen Oblast."

The point is that the regulation of human and civil rights and freedoms (which include religious freedom) is categorized by the Constitution as being the exclusive province of the Russian Federation. The components of the Federation are assigned the task of defending human rights on the basis of unified all-Russian legislation. But, despite such obvious facts, 15 republics, krays, and oblasts have already acquired home-made laws regulating religious activity in the direction of restricting and banning it. And although the oblast prosecutors have protested a number of provisions of the illegal laws insofar as they contradict Russian law, the definitive recognition of the unconstitutional nature of the regulation of religious freedom at oblast level was left to the Constitutional Court.

With a view to halting the further expansion of irrational legislation, State Duma deputies, mainly representatives of the "Yabloko" and "Russia's Choice" factions, appealed to the supreme organ of constitutional control. The submissions' legal appropriateness, justification, and technical and legal preparation did not give rise to any doubts, including in the Constitutional Court. But four months later, having heard the opinion of the reporting judge Olga Khokhryakova, the court decreed that the case involving the submissions be ended. The grounds for this decision was the removal of their signatures by two former State Duma deputies Anatoliy Sliva and Irek Muksinov. As a result the number of applicants was smaller than required and the submissions were liable to rejection as being inappropriately drawn up.

According to the law "on the Constitutional Court" a check on the constitutionality of legislative acts is not carried out on the basis of citizens' appeals except for cases where a law violates the constitutional rights of a specific appellant. Sliva and Muksinov put their signatures to the submissions as officials — State Duma deputies empowered to appeal to the Constitutional Court with a quorum equal to one fifth of the composition of the chamber. They decided to renege on their signatures when they no longer held responsible posts and did not have the powers to do so, being ordinary Russian citizens. The Constitutional Court could not take into account the belated change in the position of former members of the Party of Russian Unity and Accord faction but it did take it into account, thus creating a highly dangerous precedent.

By believing that they could take their official powers with them out of the office and later play with them as they saw fit, the Constitutional Court gave all former general prosecutors the opportunity to take back their protests and former presidents and so forth the power to rescind their edicts. And Messrs. Sliva and Muksinov were given the power to rescind their votes on a particular law which they no longer liked, if only the law "on the Constitutional Court," drunk with their own lack of control. Indeed, its decisions regarding the essence of submissions regarding constitutionality are not liable to review and are compulsory. But that does not affect the procedural aspect of the Constitutional Court's activity, which is not expressed fully enough in the law, which makes it necessary to seek analogies in civil law and it seems to us opens up the possibility of interference by the general legal court.

The court can also involve itself in the individual initiative of former deputies Sliva and Muksinov, who encroached on the powers they had lost. A number of existing Duma deputies have declared their readiness to appeal to the General Prosecutor's Office on the subject.

Military & Nuclear Issues

Russia: Grachev Presents Army Anniversary Address on Telethon

LD0705233496 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1805 GMT 7 May 96

[Address by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev to veterans and soldiers at the Russian Army Central

Theater in Moscow during celebrations of the fourth anniversary of the Russian Armed Forces — live; from the "Russia's Loyal Sons" telethon]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear veterans of the Great Patriotic War, veterans of the front, comrades-in-arms, esteemed television viewers. First of all, in the name of President of the Russian Federation Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, our commander-in-chief, I would like to pass on the most sincere best wishes and congratulations on the fourth anniversary of the Russian Armed Forces to the entire complement of the Army and Navy, to the families of servicemen, to veterans of the Armed Forces, and to all participants in the Russia's Loyal Sons TV marathon, as well as to all viewers who can see and hear us now. [applause]

Yes, our Russian Army is four years old today. This is but a moment from the historical perspective. But for the Armed Forces, from the moment when President of Russia Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin signed the decree on setting up the Russian Army, these four years have held an entire age, represented by many events and affairs which were significant for the state. No matter how difficult were the conditions under which the Army was built, over the past four years, we have managed to create a complete military body capable of providing for our national interests, and being a guarantee of stability and the central integrity of the state. Today the Russian Armed Forces hold an undisputed leading place in the affairs of maintaining international security. It is a most important factor in determining the role and significance of our country in world politics. We have firmly set our course towards strategic partnership with armies and states striving towards stability, equal cooperation and the reinforcement of international security.

Certainly, much more must still be done in order to have armed forces which are modernized and supplied with the most modern military equipment and arms, mobile, small in numbers but sufficient to mount a defense of the state. This work demands huge efforts from the whole of society and the whole structure of the state, including from all bodies of military administration. Today dozens of different people have already climbed on the stage of this, our unique Central Theater of the Russian Army. For them the Army is their own child: the defender of the Fatherland, the pride and support of the state. This charity TV marathon has been going on since 1400. Its main purpose is to help raise the authority of the Army and the profession of defender of the Fatherland, to help in the development of the Suvorov and Nakhimov Academies and the Cadet Corps, to give moral and material support to disabled people, the wounded, and those who have suffered while carrying out their military duty. It is so important how much in funds will be transferred to the marathon's account. How could the moral side of what is happening here today be any more important or socially significant?

I have listened to the speeches of many participants in this TV marathon with interest, and once more convinced myself of how strong and powerful are the roots of unity between the Army and the people, how great is the need of society to get closer to soldiers, however hard some might today try to cast doubt on this legitimate closeness and popular love of the Army. These high feelings come from the history of the Russian state, and were so convincingly displayed by the people during the years of the Great Patriotic War. I would like today to thank our veterans, before whom we are in eternal debt. Recently, at the initiative of the Ministry of Defense, the Fifty Years of Victory Fund has worked out and approved a program of urgent measures for the social support of veterans and disabled people of the Great Patriotic War and military operations on the territories of other states, and citizens carrying out their duties in the Chechen Republic. [as heard] I have ordered that all field hospitals and veterans' homes are to be affiliated to military formations, military training units, and academies. The Ministry of Defense has issued over 30,000 privileged travel passes to organize sanatorium and resort treatment and leisure for veterans and members of their families. The range and quality of medical service in military field hospitals has been significantly increased.

We know that soldiers do not choose war, but if he is sent to war, then he must fulfill his military duty with honor and to the end. Just as then in 1941, so now. Because a man in epaulets has a very great understanding of military duty, which remains above all. As Minister of Defense, I am grateful beyond measure to our officers and soldiers who ever risk their lives in the hot spots under the most difficult circumstances. The fortitude of the moral spirit of our soldiers has undergone a serious trial there. And today, to our great grief, the Army is losing its favorite sons. We bow our heads before Russian soldiers and officers who have died while carrying out their military duty. In victorious My, we bow our heads before the memory of tens of millions of people of various nationalities who laid down their lives on the altar of victory. Eternal memory and gratitude to them from the whole of mankind.

I propose that we render respect to the memory of all the fallen warriors with a minute of silence.

Russia: Grachev 'Confident' Army Can Ensure National Security

LD0705205596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1629 GMT 7 May 96

[By Sergey Ostanin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — Russia's Defence Minister Pavel Grachev stated on Monday [6 May] that he was confident of the army's readiness to fulfil combat objectives and defend the state.

Speaking at the opening of the charity telethon "Loyal Sons of Russia" Grachev said "the federal army is capable of ensuring national security and protecting the integrity and independence of the country."

The telethon is held to mark the 51th anniversary of the VE-day and the fourth anniversary of Russia's armed forces.

Part of the money raised through the charity telethon will be channeled into the reconstruction, remodelling and development of the military training system.

"The Russian army has marked its fourth anniversary today," Grachev said, adding that the army had much improved over this short period but more tasks were ahead.

According to Grachev, "the nation-wide support for the army is becoming a good tradition for Russia."

"We are grateful to all Russians — veterans, the general public and local administrations — who sympathize with the difficulties and concerns of our armed forces and do their best to help them," the Minister stated.

Russia: Army Seen Coping With Tasks Despite Difficulties of Reform

MM0705133296 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Article by Oleg Falichev: "Russian Army Has Been and Remains Guarantor of Stability and Security"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The new realities have required the Defense Ministry leadership to work not only among the troops but also on the whole in what is, for the military, the relatively new field of diplomacy. The defense minister and other officials have made dozens of visits and trips to countries in the near and far abroad, during which they laid the foundations of military cooperation, settled conflicts in various regions, and resolved other problems. The resolution of the question of setting up military bases in the Transcaucasian republics, for instance, was also an important step. Russian troops' involvement in peacekeeping operations in Abkhazia, Tajikistan, South Ossetia, and the former Yugoslavia...was a completely new business. All this amid an extremely severe lack of funding, a 15-fold reduction in state defense appropriations compared with 1991, and combat operations in Chechnya. That is why those people who claim that nothing is changing in the Army are, to put it mildly, trying to pull the wool over our eyes. They refuse to see any changes since such statements are only an excuse for attacks on the military department and political speculation.

Incidentally, a word about Chechnya. This test was one of the hardest for the young, fledgling Russian Army. Amidst a decline in moral principles, the erosion of the very foundations of the state system, and conflicting assessments of the war in society it was the Army that came to the defense of Russia's greatness and integrity. It was the Russian soldier's strength of spirit and patriotism, while by no means receiving the highest of wages for his terribly dangerous labor, that enabled Russia to fight despite a combination of highly unfavorable circumstances and conditions. It was not for nothing that even THE WASHINGTON POST noted in amazement last year: "Soldiers and officers are fighting and working in Chechnya in the kind of conditions in which no other army in the world could operate."

Take the most painful aspect today — the social aspect. Certainly, there are still many shortcomings here, particularly as regards prompt payment of wages. But how can you close your eyes to the fact that in the last three years alone over 100,000 (!) servicemen's families have received a roof over their head? That is particularly important today since it cannot be denied that the question has become a political issue instead of a purely domestic one. People keen to capitalize on this should be aware that it is planned to commission another 36,000 new apartments by fall 1996 as part of the housing program.

But what does the future hold in store for us? This year and subsequently radical transformations of the structure of the Armed Forces, their services, and combat arms will continue. Including the creation of what are effectively new operational groups in districts which prior to the breakup of the Union were considered virtually to be in the rear, along with the creation of new territorial commands.... We will apply different principles for the command and control of troops and their equipping with combat hardware and arms. The creation of a military infrastructure on Russian Federation territory should largely be completed. As Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Federation defense minister, stressed at one time, as a result of these measures Russia will have Armed Forces that are small but sufficient to reliably defend the country and not pose a military threat to neighboring countries. Although, let me say, this work does of course require great effort by all society and all state organs. After all, Army reform, let alone military reform as a whole, is not a job for any one leader personally but a job for the state as a whole.

Last but not least. The negative phenomenon of nonregulation relations in the Army and Navy has shown a firm and steady tendency to decline for the first time(!). In 1995 compared with 1994 there were 13 percent fewer cases. It has also proved possible to stop the process of young officers being discharged into the reserve. These and other positive trends indicate that our Armed Forces are combat ready and, despite the difficulties, are successfully performing their tasks. Figuratively speaking, they are also ripe for great changes. But domestic political stability in the state and a reliable economy are needed for that.

Russia: Communist Party Sets Out Concept of Military Reform

LD0705175996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1119 GMT 7 May

[ITAR-TASS correspondent Natalya Panshina]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 7 May (ITAR-TASS) — Mikhail Surkov, member of the Russian Communist Party leadership and deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee for Defense, attempted today to set out for journalists the concept of military reform as seen by supporters of Gennadiy Zyuganov, candidate of people's patriotic forces.

He said that military reform was possible only in a strong state and should be implemented "not by a defense minister but by a special body led by the head of state."

Having failed, after all, to satisfy media interest in the section on military construction Mikhail Surkov maintained, nevertheless, that "our concept of military reform has been developed by professionals." He declined, however, to name those "serving officers and generals" who dealt with it because, if they became known, the representative of the Communist Party leadership said, "they could be sacked."

Russia: Former Scientist Charged With Smuggling Nuclear-Related Material

LD0705193696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1748 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KRASNOYARSK, Russia, May 7 (Interfax-Eurasia) — The authorities in Russia's Krasnoyarsk territory have charged a local resident with smuggling abroad about a kilogram of material of use in nuclear technology, a senior security official said.

The suspect is in custody, Anatoliy Samkov, head of the local branch of the Federal Security Service, told Interfax-Eurasia.

Samkov denied reports that what had been taken abroad was nuclear material. "It wasn't plutonium, uranium or any such thing," he said. It was a substance that could be used in making nuclear equipment such as casing or pipes.

Samkov said there was nothing sensational about the incident and that the only reason for the prosecution was the suspected illegal export of material whose export is limited by law.

Samkov declined to name the detainee, "a former scientist," and said he was not sure the suspect would be convicted.

Russia: FSB Confirms Arrest of Illegal Exporter of Radioactive Material

LD0705122396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0933 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KRASNOYARSK, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — Criminal proceedings have been instituted in Krasnoyarsk, East Siberia, against a scientist who organised illegal exports of dual-purpose radioactive materials.

The press service of the Krasnoyarsk regional office of the Federal Security Service [FSB] told Itar-Tass today that the scientist employed by a Krasnoyarsk-based research facility invented technology and manufactured radioactive materials in his lab.

Sources in the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation confirmed the fact of detention of the suspect specialist.

Throughout the duration of his underground activity, the specialist whose name and the location of the research centre the sources in Krasnoyarsk and Moscow press service refused to disclose manufactured and exported to other countries more than one kilogram of radioactive materials which can be used for military purposes.

The investigators are now working to identify the ring of people who might have assisted the man in his actions.

In the Soviet era, Krasnoyarsk was a major centre for manufacturing fissile materials. Two secret "nuclear towns" Krasnoyarsk-26 and Krasnoyarsk-45 are located in the territory. One of them is the home of the Krasnoyarsk mining and chemical combined works which became known in its time as the world's largest manufacturer of weapons-grade plutonium. Enriched uranium was produced in Krasnoyarsk-45 until 1987. Now, an electro-chemical plant located here works for the nuclear power complex.

Russia: Soskovets Discusses Handling Nuclear Waste in Murmansk

LD0705122496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0932 GMT 7 May 96

[By Oleg Velichko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MURMANSK, May 7 (Itar-Tass) — Visiting first Vice-Premier Oleg Soskovets held a conference with heads of administrations and directors of major industrial enterprises of the Murmansk region today.

Soskovets noted that a federal programme "On handling nuclear waste and used nuclear materials, their utilization and dumping in 1996-2005" envisages measures which will help remove tension over nuclear waste processing in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions. The programme envisages budgetary allocations worth 8.8 billion roubles to be invested into the nuclear waste processing industry, apart from 79 billion roubles envisaged for the processing of used nuclear fuel discharged by submarines of the Northern and Pacific fleets.

Soskovets believes that progress has been made in the process of paying overdue wages in Russia's northern areas. The outstanding debt has been fully paid out of budgetary funds, although some problems remain because of the insolvency of local budgets, he said. In particular, in the Murmansk region the amount of overdue wages ought to have been paid in the first quarter reached 10 billion roubles.

Soskovets declared that the budgetary debt to the Northern fleet worth 388 billion roubles would be paid in the near future. According to the Vice-Premier, the Russian Defence Ministry was instructed to resolve the problem of outstanding debt to ship repair plants of the fleet at the expense of the transfer of de-commissioned ships to ship-repair plants.

Russia: Mayak Plant Head Says Nuclear Reprocessing Facility 'Unstable'

MS0805103996 London THE TIMES in English 8 May 96 p 13

[Report by Michael Binyon: "Russians Fear Disaster at Reprocessing Plant"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yevgeni Drozhko, deputy head of Russia's vast secret nuclear reprocessing plant at Mayak in central Siberia, has given a warning that the accident-prone facility is so unstable it could cause a huge nuclear disaster.

A government minister, Viktor Vladimirov, also admitted that radiation from the waste dumped around the reprocessing plant was far higher than that spewed out of the Chernobyl reactor during the disastrous explosion ten years ago.

Their warnings come two weeks after a nuclear summit in Moscow agreed that the West must take urgent measures to stabilise Russia's ageing nuclear installations.

Mayak is Russia's only nuclear reprocessing plant. It stores more than 500,000 tonnes of solid nuclear waste, more than 523 million cubic yards of liquid nuclear waste and handles waste generated by nuclear submarines.

Mr Vladimirov, the Deputy Emergency Situations Minister, said Mayak — once shrouded in secrecy — had suffered serious accidents.

The accidents — in 1949, 1957 and 1967 — were hushed up. Western environmentalists who have visited Mayak have called it a "clockwork bomb". About 10,000 families evacuated from contaminated areas are living in makeshift houses put up 30 years ago.

— Moscow: A Russian nuclear scientist trying to smuggle abroad fissionable material has been detained, authorities said yesterday (Thomas de Waal writes). The unnamed scientist was detained in the west Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk. TASS said he had 2lb of high-grade material; this suggests it was weapons-grade plutonium.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Calls For Order in Military Finances

MM0805095796 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 8 May 96 p 6

[Unattributed untitled report from "Documents" section]

[FBIS Translated Text] Worried at the blatantly inadequate level of financing of the Russian Federation Armed Forces and other troops, military formations, and military organs, the State Duma has adopted an appeal to the Russian Federation president and Government chairman on the adoption of measures to put their activity in order.

The financing of this important sphere of the state's life, the appeal notes, remains critical. In the first quarter of 1996 alone actual debts to the Russian Federation Defense Ministry rose by 5.8 trillion rubles [R] and were almost double quarterly payments. The lower level of provision for troops throughout the past five years has put them on the verge of total collapse. The defense industry has been virtually brought to a standstill.

The State Duma believes that an essential condition for overcoming the situation which has taken shape in the troops is to bring their composition and numerical strength into line with the state's feasible tasks and potential.

The State Duma has suggested to the Russian president that he examine very soon the question of crating a single organ for the coordination and monitoring of the activity of the Russian Federation Armed Forces and other troops, military formations, and military organs and that he elaborate a general concept for their organizational development and in conjunction with the Russian Federation Government determine a package of measures to put their tasks and composition and numerical strength in order proceeding from real need and existing possibilities for ensuring the state's defense and security.

Russia: Duma Official Says Coercion Will Not Solve Arrears Problem

MM0705115396 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 6 May 96 p 1

[Report by Gennadiy Lyulkin under the "Issue of the Day" rubric: "Where Can Money Be Found for Arrears"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Judging by reports in the press, demands for unpaid wages are stiffening in the country. It is basically a question of necessity!

"But is it possible to resolve the problem of wage delays by applying tough sanctions alone?" I asked Sergey Kalashnikov, chairman of the Russian Federation State Duma Labor and Social Policy Committee.

[Kalashnikov] Punitive sanctions are a good thing. The carrot and stick approach has never been out of place in administration. I think that officials should bear the responsibility for wage arrears. Without harsh measures it is impossible to halt the tyranny that exists today.

A month ago parliamentary hearings into wage payment were held. One of the chief reasons for their nonpayment is that many managers have been making wide use of free credit from their own workers on the sly. The is the reality of the situation. The fact that the president is announcing tough actions is not a bad thing.

There is, however, a small problem. No economic problem has yet been resolved by purely administrative means. They also cannot resolve the problem of wage arrears because it is actually not the abuses of individual officials that are of greatest importance here but the economy's general decline. If there is no production, you get unavoidable disruption in the production chain, which leads to wage arrears.

Economic problems cannot be resolved by coercive methods — this is axiomatic. On the other hand, the president has not actually removed or punished anybody. In Yekaterinburg he announces: "I am removing this guy; he is henceforth terminated." But the guy is working and does not give a damn. He announced that he had sacked Smirnov, chief of the Main Administration of the Federal Treasury, but he is still working. This is just talk....

Regional Affairs

Russia: Yeltsin Confirms Intention To Visit Chechnya

LD0705195796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1818 GMT 7 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Volgograd, 7 May (Itar-Tass) — "There are several places in the former Soviet Union that are of special importance for the victory in the Great Fatherland War, and Stalingrad is one of them." This is how in an interview with Volgograd television Russian President Boris Yeltsin today explained his decision to come to the hero city on the River Volga on 9 May after taking part in the festivities in Moscow on the morning of the same day.

Boris Yeltsin confirmed his decision to visit Chechnya, though he said that "many people are trying to dissuade him" from such a step. He did not specify the exact dates of the trip. At the same time the president denied rumors about any attempts on his life. "Well," Boris Yeltsin said smiling, "I have had accidents in almost all kinds of transport, but always emerged, so to speak, unscathed from these situations."

The head of state noted that "he is coming to Volgograd in order to share the joy of the great holiday with the defenders of Stalingrad, veterans and Volgograd residents" and to discuss current affairs, problems, and concerns in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and to pay tribute to the memory of the fallen. "I was a boy during the war," the president said, "however, my family lived through everything which happened in those times. My uncle, my father's brother, was killed at the front."

On the eve of Victory Day Boris Yeltsin paid special attention to the need to implement the federal law on veterans. "Some people," the president noted, "believed that this law was unimplementable. However, we decided to divide it into three stages and implement it stage-by-stage. At present the provisions within the first stage are being implemented. A new presidential decree on implementing the law on veterans is now being drawn up. The law, I think, will be fully implemented next year."

"In the very near future," Boris Yeltsin pointed out, "a number of social issues aimed at improving the life of veterans will be resolved." He said that issues relating to the timely payment of pensions and wages have been placed under special presidential supervision. "If there are instances when the decree on wages and pensions is not fulfilled, those guilty will be punished irrespective of their posts," the president stressed.

Russia: Tikhomirov Applauds Results of Goyskoye Operation

LD0805125196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1000 GMT 8 May 96

[Report from the "Vesti" newscast including recorded remarks by General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov at 8 May news conference, location not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The ITAR-TASS news agency reported today that during yesterday's military operation in the village of Goyskoye, some of the rebels' military hardware was seized, including two latest Russian-made models of armored vehicles. They could be just the prototypes as the Russian army has not yet received such vehicles. Incidentally, today some details of this operation came to light. Over to our correspondent Azamat Saitov.

[Saitov] This morning General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov gave a news conference on the results of yesterday's operation to seize the village of Goyskoye which was well reinforced by the rebels. In a strategic sense, the village provides a key access to the foothills and mountains of Chechnya.

[Tikhomirov] The results of yesterday's tough confrontation have shown once more what the army and the commanders are capable of when we enter a tough confrontation with bandits. Therefore, people have displayed the greatest courage and skill. And the main thing is that casualties have been minimal. The bandits, if I can describe them that way, have lost, to put it mildly, more than 40 men, whereas we have had losses through injuries. One person was seriously wounded and he, to our great regret, has died.

[Saitov] At the meeting with journalists, the commander showed the passport of rebel number one — Shamil Basayev. It was seized, among other documents, in fighting near Vedeno. Tikhomirov also answered the question of the Vesti correspondent as to whether the federal troops had really shelled Urus-Martan.

[Tikhomirov] I can say that there were no plans for any strikes in Urus-Martan. Therefore I understand the alarm of [word indistinct] when thudding could be heard around because the actual troops are situated literally 1.5 km and sometimes just 500 m away. I can understand the alarm. When strikes are dealt by the army and artillery I do not rule out that something might have gone astray. But this was not intentional, and I am telling you again that no such operations were carried out in Urus-Martan. [video shows Tikhomirov at news conference]

Russia: Chechnya: Federal Troops Commander Denies Strike on Urus-Martan

LD0705151396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1418 GMT 7 May 96

[By Vaynakhpress-TASS correspondents Kometa Tepsayeva and Alvi Karimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 7 May (Itar-Tass) — The Chechen town of Urus-Martan and the nearby village of Martan-Chu have come under bomb and missile strikes today. The correspondents for the republic's Vaynakhpress agency learnt this by telephone from Yusup Elmurzayev, head of the Urus-Martanovskiy District administration, who did not say who had carried out the strikes.

Asked by ITAR-TASS correspondent Anatoliy Yurkin to comment on the report, General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, commander of the group of federal troops in Chechnya, said on the telephone that "no bomb, missile, or any other strikes have been carried out against Urus-Martan." The main staff of the Russian Air Force, for its part, said that operational data suggested the aircraft based in the northern Caucasus had not been taking part in any hostilities. Not a single aircraft has left on a mission or carried out bomb and missile strikes against any area in Chechnya.

According to Yusup Elmurzayev, the shelling of Urus-Martan, in which artillery and five helicopters took part, started at 1300 and lasted for about an hour, with a short interval. The head of the district administration said that according to preliminary reports two people were killed and eight badly wounded. There was structural damage in the town and over 20 motor vehicles were burnt.

Elmurzayev also said that during the night at 0300, and later at 1100, Grad and Uragan artillery systems had shelled the village of Martan-Chu. He said three people were killed and about 10 wounded there. The village of Martan-Chu had recently signed a protocol on peace and accord with representatives of the federal forces command and of the Chechen authorities.

The head of the district administration said there had "never been any gunmen" in Urus-Martan and its inhabitants had "always been opposed to [Dzhokhar] Dudayev."

Russia: Chechnya: Reporters Describe Situation Around Shali

MM0705155196 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
7 May 96 p 2

[Report by Igor Rotar and Yuriy Snegirev: "Shali 'Cleanup' in Progress. When Talking to Journalists Russian Generals in Chechnya Use One Command — 'Beat It!'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy — A special passport-checking operation began in the village of Shali at 0800 hours 6 May. Starting at a dairy farm, 16 groups of federal forces and local police started combing the village for gunmen and weapons. According to the command's estimates, the operation was supposed to finish by lunchtime, and it promised to lift the week-long blockade of the village by evening.

Major General Vladimir Shamanov, commander of the Russian Federation Defense Ministry Grouping in Chechnya, reported that 1,000 servicemen — 700 from the Internal Troops, 250 from the Chechen MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs], and 50 rayon police officers — had taken part in the operation. They moved south to north along 16 main streets, checking every apartment block. If they encounter resistance they have the right to take "appropriate measures" (to shoot).

The blockade of the village has gone on for over a week now. During this time the inhabitants managed to persuade the gunmen to leave the village. Weapons are being surrendered. The inhabitants brought 63 AK assault rifles, all in excellent condition and oiled, to our unit stationed on the outskirts of Shali. The inhabitants collected a total of around 100 guns from homesteads, but the military believe that this is not enough.

The Chechen side has not fulfilled another condition of the ultimatum: On 5 May it should have released 36 captured servicemen taken prisoner in the vicinity of Shali. Shali inhabitants claim that there was simply not enough time before the deadline to bring the prisoners from the villages where they were being held.

At the checkpoint at the entrance to Shali our vehicle was stopped by Russian contract servicemen wearing masks: "Hands up! Get out of the vehicle! Give me that camera right now!" — a serviceman ordered us. With a practiced movement he exposed the film. "Any complaints?! Just get out of here before we put a bullet in you. Can't you see that a Dudayev rally has assembled on the road? Soon we will start shooting at it," the clearly drunk federal soldiers said to us, laughing. Arguing with them is a pointless exercise. We already know that, contrary to all legal norms, travel by journalists around Chechnya has been prohibited practically everywhere. This is not arbitrary action by contract servicemen: They are merely carrying out orders received from above.

When in the presence of a large number of journalists one of us asked Anatoliy Kvashin, commander of the North Caucasus Military District, why journalists are being prevented from moving around Chechnya, the reply was: "And you can beat it as well!..."

...We drove up to the independence supporters' rally on the outskirts of Shali village. About 300 people had gathered at the checkpoint. The demonstrators' slogans were: "Troops out," "Down with the occupiers!" and "Freedom or death."

"We have organized a peace march. People have come here from all over the republic," Ichkeriya parliamentary Deputy Said Abumuslimov told us. "We marched peacefully up to this post, but we are not being allowed any further. Periodically the federal troops open fire to frighten us."

Immediately after these words shots rang out. Combat helicopters appeared. But the crowd just took heart. "Allah akhbar, death to the occupiers!" the demonstrators roared.

[IZVESTIYA] "How will you carry on living after Dzhokhar Dudayev's death?"

"The people have united even more strongly," Abumuslimov went on. "We will not make any concessions in the talks with Russia! Only direct talks are possible — between Yeltsin and Yandarbiyev. Beware our revenge for the death of the first Chechen president!"

A group of Chechen women interrupted him.

"What are you telling the politicians?! Ask us! We have just come from Shali. Tell everybody that we do not want to die!" Maisa Tabuyeva said.

[IZVESTIYA] "What is the situation there?"

"The rally continues in the square, we are demanding the ending of the blockade. We have sent representatives for talks with the military. They are prepared to prove that there are no gunmen in the village. Let them check! Everybody is afraid of only one thing — that the Russians will organize another Samashki here."

Meanwhile representatives of the authorities are sure that this time it will be possible to avoid bloodshed.

"There must be no assault. The talks have been conducted for such a long time because we felt that this time we could reach an agreement peacefully," Chechen Republic Prime Minister Nikolay Koshman told us.

"I participated in the Samashki 'cleanup' operation. We fought well-trained gunmen there," Colonel Viktor, one of this operation's leaders, told us. "In Shali the situation is completely different: 'Serious' gunmen left the village long ago. Only those who, having surrendered their weapons, are joining the ranks of peaceful inhabitants are left. It is practically impossible to prove that they fought on Dudayev's side. I think that everything will pass off peacefully. But my subunit is ready for anything."

Russia: Fighter Jet Downed in Chechnya May Have Been Booby-Trapped

LD0605170496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1516 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, May 6 (Interfax) — A bomb planted in a Russian Su-25 attack plane may have destroyed the jet and killed the two crew in Chechnya Sunday, Col. Gennadiy Lisenkov, head of the Russian Air Force press center, told Interfax Monday.

Lisenkov said that this was a third Su-25 attack plane lost in similar circumstances, as it was recovering from a dive. "The bomb planted in the jet obviously responded to high g-load," he believes.

To shoot down such a plane by anti-aircraft fire is a difficult task, he said.

"The fliers who fought in Afghanistan know that the jet could reach the air strip even after a direct hit by a Stinger missile. In our cases the planes exploded in mid-air and the pilots were killed instantly," Lisenkov explained.

The possibility of a bomb planted in the jets before they took off is being investigated by Russian special services, he said.

Asked by Interfax, Lisenkov said that the separatists units in Chechnya possess a fair amount of anti-aircraft hardware, notably Stingers.

A total of three Su-25 attack planes and two Su-40 bombers were lost in Chechnya since December 1994: 40 combat planes were damaged.

Russia: Radon Contamination Reported in Sverdlovsk Resort

LD0805075696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0625 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 8 May (Itar-Tass) — Some of the territory of the "Kurin" resort in Sverdlovsk Region has been contaminated with radioactive salt. An ITAR-TASS correspondent was told at the Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Natural Disasters that a broken lead container was found in the resort's radon laboratory on 6 May. The glass bulb holding 30 mm of radon salt inside the container had been damaged. The salt had spilled out and become scattered around. The contaminated area was 112 square meters. Now this area has been isolated and is being guarded and decontaminated.

Russia: Omsk Governor Seeks Scapegoats for Local Ills

MM0705152796 Moscow TRUD in Russian 7 May 96 p 4

[Report by correspondent Vladimir Golubev: "If There Is Nothing To Share Out, the Press Must Be To Blame. The Hole in Omsk's Budget Cannot Be Filled by Orchestrating Outcry"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Omsk — Only during the second quarter did the smoke at long last disperse on the battlefield over money from the oblast budget. For months the city had been fighting the countryside for a better share, medicine had been fighting education, one sector of industry had been fighting another. What eventually emerged was a fact that had been obvious right from the start: There is a catastrophic shortage of funds. For everyone.

Really painful cuts had to be made. For instance, only half as much funds were allocated for the support of the countryside. Although everybody knows that this is tantamount to sawing through the branch you are sitting on. The region's economy is based on the agrarian sector and the petrochemical industry. Formerly almost half the oblast's agricultural produce was shipped elsewhere, but now production has practically fallen to the level of internal consumption. If this trend continues, in a few years Omsk will have to ship food in from outside. From where?

The situation was already grave, then all of a sudden the oblast's most productive activity — the oil refinery — struck an unexpected blow to the budget, which already had a huge deficit. Apparently the finance administration had not coordinated the amounts of tax revenues with the budget. They will actually be several times less than the figures already entered as income.

The commission of deputies urgently set up to seek the "missing taxes" drew a depressing conclusion: The reasons are entirely objective. The correlation between the prices of crude oil and refinery products has changed, prices of petroleum products in the world market have fallen, and rail tariffs have increased. As a result the oblast will receive 460 billion rubles [R] less than it was expecting from the oil refinery workers. There is simply no means of filling this hole in the budget.

No matter how the revenue pie is divided, there seems to be no way to protect social services. Production is declining, tax payments are drying up, the local treasury is coming apart at the seams, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain acceptable living standards. The consequences are natural: In the recent parliamentary elections the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] and the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] both came out winners. The party in power got very few votes. It would be wrong to attribute this solely to opposition intrigues. People are voting "according to the situation" rather than out of ardent sympathies for the Zhirinovskiyites or Zyuganovites. Politics is increasingly reflecting the serious economic problems. Of course, you could call the oblast statistical administration a "collective member of the CPRF," as Oblast Governor Leonid Polezhayev did recently, but even if they were democrats through and through, one wonders where they are supposed to conjure up figures indicating growth in the region's economic potential when there is unfortunately no such growth? (If only that were true just in Omsk.)

The governor did not bolster this serious accusation with any evidence. But he issued another scandalous statement telling oblast residents that pensioners are not getting their pensions on time because of extremely poor work by the pension fund's Omsk department, and particularly Chairman I. Kamenev. And that the social-commercial bank set up by the fund (incidentally, the city administration's official bank) is an "MMM-style pyramid." Leonid Konstantinovich immediately issued a decree ordering that the pension fund's account be transferred to the Central Bank's Main Administration for Omsk Oblast and that the chairman of the Russian Pension Fund be sent a submission that I. Kamenev is not up to his job.

It is hardly necessary to explain what kind of consequences such comments by the oblast's respected leader could have for any financial institution. The bank's clients, who include a great many elderly people, will have to pay. And as for the delays in paying pensions, this topic is so "double-edged" for the local authorities that it would be better not to raise it at all. After all, insurance pension contributions are merely one of the forms of taxes levied on working enterprises and citizens. And if enterprises are at a standstill, where is the money for the pension fund to come from?

According to the fund, it is possible to make a comparative analysis of the situation in various spheres of the region's economy. For instance, 80 percent of all insurance contributions are collected in the oblast center, but almost half of the collected funds go on pensions for people in the countryside. This means that the great mass of rural commodity producers are bankrupt, and the workers of former collective farms (now joint-stock companies) have forgotten what real money looks like. Of course, the responsibility for this situation is not borne only by the federal government.

Back in 1994 there were no problems with regard to pension payment in the oblast. They even collected more than was required, which was indirect evidence of the relatively satisfactory situation in the region's economy. The pension fund began to suffer turmoil last year, and a really critical situation emerged in the first quarter of this year. A multibillion-ruble loan had to be taken out with commercial banks in February in order to pay pensions. An even bigger loan was required in March, and this naturally has to be paid for — in other words, the difficulties are snowballing.

Attempts to "name the guilty parties" to blame for the grave situation are a characteristic feature of the policy of regional leaders. The statistics administration that collects the "wrong" figures is to blame. The opposition, which is hampering work, is to blame. The chairman of the pension fund is to blame for the fact that industry is coming to a standstill, and, of course, the mass media are to blame for everything.

The press has come under particular fire: At a recent press conference the governor accused journalists of venality, political bias, and unpatriotic attitudes. Although in general Leonid Konstantinovich is wrong to complain of insidious bias in the press, since national newspapers treat the oblast leader with great respect, and the local press is largely in the pay of the local authorities themselves. Admittedly, the administration does not make sufficiently effective use of its huge information potential. Readers no longer attach credence to the never-ending stream of "upbeat" articles — but who is to blame for that?

The inability and reluctance to operate when there is an active opposition is a hallmark of Russian politicians at all levels inherited from the unrelieved communist single-party system. And intolerance of dissent increases as the situation in the sector entrusted to them deteriorates. This is easily explained: It is objectively impossible to rapidly rectify the situation in the socioeconomic sphere, but it seems feasible to starve of oxygen those who doubt the truth of the picture of general prosperity.

Incidentally, some local newspapers openly wrote that the governor's attack on the chairman of the pension fund was by no means prompted by concern for pensioners. The point is that the fund is a founder of the social-commercial bank, which is providing material support to the STV-3 television company, which is opposed to the local authorities; the main blow was directed against the TV company.

At bottom, the opposition in itself is no threat to the local authorities, as the gubernatorial elections, which Leonid Polezhayev won with a clear margin, confirmed. The CPRF rivals were unable to put forward any serious candidate. But what is really a danger to the administration is the growing social tension in the oblast.

At first glance it is politically advantageous to seek a fall guy or to make out that all the problems stem from incompetent decisions by the federal government and all the achievements from skillful steps by the local authorities. But how long can that idea be exploited? Such maneuvers may give certain politicians a boost in the opinion polls, but they destroy the very structure of state power. These are mistakes that many of our political leaders unfortunately keep on making, both in the center and at local level.

Economic Issues

Russia: Economy Ministry Forecasts Economic Growth in Near Future

MK0805104896 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 7 May 96 p 2

[Report by Elmar Murtazayev: "The April Inflation Rate Has Fallen To Another Record Level. The Economy Ministry Forecasts an Economic Growth on Condition of 'Course Stability'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the Russian State Statistics Committee, in April the rate of inflation in Russia fell to 2.2 percent, as compared with 2.8 percent in March and February. Thus, for a third straight month the rates of growth of consumer prices remain at an all-time low for the years of the reform. The inflation rate in the past four months of 1996 in Russia has been as low as 12.4 percent.

State Statistics Committee figures show that the prices for foodstuffs in April grew by 1.8 percent, as compared with 2.9 percent in March, whereas prices for nonfood goods went up by 1.4 percent (as compared with 1.9 percent in March). On the whole, since the beginning of the year, prices for foodstuffs and for nonfood goods in Russia have grown by 11.6 and 8.4 percent, respectively. Calculations by statistical agency experts show that if the present price growth rate persists until the end of the year, the total rate of inflation this year can be as low as 34 percent, which will mean that the Government and the Central Bank have fulfilled the fundamental provisions of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund. The authorities' achievements in countering inflation become especially conspicuous if we recall that the rate of inflation last year was 131 percent.

In the opinion of Economy Ministry experts, the fall in inflation rate is due to the rigid monetary policy pursued by the Government and the Central Bank last fall. As evidenced by statistics in the countries with transition economy, economic growth becomes possible only when the annual rate of inflation does not exceed 40 percent. Thus, for the first time in the years of reforms, Russia has a real chance to get out of the period of recession.

Now the main problem for the Government is to pursue an active structural policy. Statistical data show that the main factor that has contributed to inflation in the past few months is the growth of prices for services, which rose by 5.0 percent in April and 4.3 percent in March. In addition, the lack of working capital at enterprises — which is due, according to Economy Ministry experts, to unavailability of bank credits — continues to provoke a downswing, which amounted in the first quarter of 1996 to four percent as compared with the same period last year. The experts believe that if credit rates are reduced, an economic growth can start in Russia right in beginning of the second half of the year.

Russia: Inclined Peg for Ruble Linked to Election Politics

MK0805045296 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Report by Vadim Bardin: "The Exchange Rate Is Being Steered To Follow the Course of Inflation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At his meeting with Russian media directors yesterday First Deputy Premier Vladimir Kadannikov promised that a governmental decision on a new — after 1 June — exchange policy will be made in "two to three weeks." Yet the deputy premier did not particularly maintain the secrecy that traditionally accompanies all drafts pertaining to currency regulation. He said that the currency corridor will remain but will be inclined; that is to say, the rate of the dollar will be pegged to the internal inflation rate.

Vladimir Kadannikov did not tell his audience anything new. Many of the exchange policy makers, including the president's economic adviser Aleksandr Livshits, had earlier commented on a possible "inclined corridor" for the ruble. Meanwhile, only recently Livshits was opposed to the exchange rate being linked to internal inflation, rightly supposing that in this event the anti-inflation effect of a limited band policy will be blurred at best. What prompted the currency policy makers to change their minds then?

Vladimir Kadannikov's statement did not provide an answer to this question. According to him keeping the dollar within a straitjacket has diminished yields on export operations. This trend for its part, the deputy premier continued, led to a shrinking taxable base and a decline in budget revenues. There is a certain logic here, but it is not entirely flawless. If the new currency exchange policy results in a growing devaluation of the ruble, this will definitely raise export yields. As for budget revenues, they will hardly grow, considering the final abolition of export tariffs as of 1 July.

Here is our theory. The decision to "incline" the currency band is a political compromise. Factoring internal inflation into exchange rate fluctuations leaves freedom to maneuver with various financial policy options in the future. If it proves possible to keep the exchange rate within a rigid band, then the rate of inflation at, say, 1.5 percent a month, will little differ from the current exchange policy. If there is not enough resource to restrain it, then the principle of pegging the exchange rate to internal inflation can be preserved, although this will in effect be quite a different economic policy. In would be more in line with the current economic policy course, as set out in particular in a statement by the Government and the Central Bank to the IMF, if the ruble exchange rate was maintained within a narrower band than now.

This compromise certainly does not mean that an exchange policy is being shaped to fit an inflationary economy. Even so, this is a demonstration by the incumbent authorities of their readiness to adjust their economic policy, which is possible any time after presidential elections. The calculation is, among other things, that this signal will be heard by the electorate before 16 June. In this context it is appropriate to recall support of raw material-exporting regions for which a softer currency policy is critical.

Russia: Government Views 'Worrying' Pension Fund Shortfall

MM0805113596 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 8 May 96 p 1

[Unattributed report under the rubric "In the Russian Federation Government": "Pensions Do Not Come Out of Thin Air"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The debt due from contributors to the Pension Fund constitutes 23 trillion rubles [R] or, with fines taken into account, over R40 trillion.

Lyudmila Bezlepkina, minister for social protection, reported this at yesterday's Russian Federation Government sitting. She recalled that there are 37 million pensioners in Russia receiving money through insurance payments to the pension fund. Bezlepkina also reported that that all regions of Russia have received funds for the payment of pensions in March, and the debt for April has been eliminated in approximately half of Federation components.

From what the minister said, the continuing reduction in the number of workers making insurance payments is worrying: Their number has fallen from 75.8 million in 1991 to 68.6 million in 1995. At the same time, in the past three years the share of pensions in the population's total income has fallen from 70 to 39 percent. Last year pensions were delayed by an average of 20-30 days in 63 Russian Federation components despite the fact that, as Lyudmila Bezlepkina said, the government has sold reserves worth $500 million from the country's gold and currency reserve for the payment of pensions.

This year, according to the Ministry for Social Protection, urgent measures need to be taken to increase efficiency in collecting insurance payments and to reinforce payment discipline, accompanied by the payment of subsidies from the federal budget.

The Federal Law "On the Procedure for Calculating and Increasing State Pensions," which is to be adopted by the government toward the end of the year and come into effect as of February 1997, will enable the situation in this sphere to be improved. Under the law, the maximum pension will constitute 90 percent of average earnings, which corresponds approximately to 12 current minimum wages. At present the maximum pension constitutes 4.8 minimum wages.

International Affairs

Ukraine: Udovenko Rejects NATO, CIS Security Accord Membership

LD0805104296 Kiev UT-2 Television Network in Ukrainian 0505 GMT 8 May 96

[From the "Vikna" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko has said that Ukraine intends to remain a nonaligned state and will not join either NATO or the Tashkent agreement on CIS collective security. The foreign minister made this statement at a meeting of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Committee for Relations with Nonmember Countries on 7 May in Kiev. [passage omitted]

Ukraine: EU Upholds Economic Transition Status for Ukraine

LD0705221496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1748 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, May 7 (Interfax - Ukraine) — A delegation of the European Union at talks in Kiev has upheld granting Ukraine the status of a country with an economy in transition, Igor Mityukov, co-chairman of the Ukraine-European Union joint committee, told Interfax - Ukraine.

At the same time he said that the move would bring political, rather than economic, results.

Mityukov believes that a cut in the deficit in trade between Ukraine and the EU can be linked to the status issue. Trade and economic relations between Ukraine and the EU can be balanced through a softening of anti-dumping procedures, he said.

He named a free-trade agreement as the priority goal in relations between Ukraine and the EU. He recalled that under an earlier agreement between Ukraine and the EU, talks on the issue are to begin in 1998, but some EU countries favor completing the talks in 1998.

Ukraine's ban on the import of animal products from certain EU countries and Switzerland was one of the hot issues at the committee meeting, Mityukov said. The measures were taken in late March in connection with the mad cow disease epidemic in Great Britain.

He said European partners had reproached Ukraine for introducing the sanctions without specifying concrete products. It has been agreed to hold separate consultations on the issue.

Mityukov hopes that in 1996 parliaments in all EU countries will ratify the 1994 agreement on partnership between Ukraine and the EU. So far, Great Britain, Spain and Denmark have ratified the agreement.

The next session of the committee is to be held in April 1997.

Ukraine: Moroz: Kiev To Pursue Integration Into European Structures

LD0705212696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1601 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 7 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada [Supreme Council] Chairman Oleksandr Moroz said that Ukraine will "consistently and purposefully" follow the path of integration into European structures.

Addressing a meeting of the committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for relations with the countries — not members of the organization, which is in session in Kiev today, he said: "Our activities at the Council of Europe are aimed at efficient and constructive work for strengthening European cooperation". O. Moroz said that the Ukrainian Parliament "has embarked on the adaptation of he country's legislation to the European standards". "A number of European conventions and protocols are also being prepared for ratification", he added.

"There shall be no stereotyped approaches to all countries, as well as demands for complete and immediate democracy in Ukraine. Yet, Ukraine will irreversibly enhance the democratic basis of her statehood", O. Moroz emphasized.

The Ukrainian Parliament Speaker expressed the view that "factors having an impact on the European security shall be analyzed in depth", and reminded his initiative that an international conference on those issues be called in Kiev.

Ukraine: Kuchma Meets Head of Polish Security Bureau

LD0705205296 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1445 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — At a meeting with Jerzy Milewski, head of the Polish Security Bureau and cochairman of the advisory committee of the Polish and Ukrainian presidents, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma described the relations with Poland as "very important for Ukraine."

Kuchma stressed that Ukraine is interested in good relations with its neighbor and spoke in favor of a continuous dialogue between Poland and Ukraine and "open consultations between the leaders of the two countries."

Milewski said "there cannot be free Poland without free Ukraine." He briefed Kuchma on the process of Poland's integration into Europe, in particular into NATO and the EU.

Kuchma noted that Ukraine's position on the issue of the expansion of NATO is consistent and expressed his conviction that "no country has the right to veto another country's entry to any international organization."

During the meeting, the sides discussed the visit of the Ukrainian president to Poland in June 1996.

Ukraine: Security Council Official on Meeting With Polish Colleague

LD0705212896 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
1630 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Volodymyr Horbulin, secretary of the Ukrainian president's National Security Council, met Jerzy Milewskiy, head of the Polish Security Bureau, on 7 May to discuss Ukraine's and Poland's participation in the process of integration into European structures.

After the meeting Volodymyr Horbulin told journalists that the sides had worked out common approaches to this process, particularly through active participation in the OSCE, NATO, the Western European Initiative [as received], and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

According to Volodymyr Horbulin, ways of increasing Ukraine's role in the Western European Initiative [as received] were discussed and details of the Ukrainian president's visit to Poland in June of this year finalized.

Volodymyr Horbulin told journalists that they had also discussed Russian influence in the eastern European region. "The conditions should be created for Russia to better understand the process of Poland's and Ukraine's integration into Europe," he noted.

Ukraine: Iran's Maleki on Two-Day Official Visit to Kiev

WS0805090496 Kiev UKRINFORM in English
0620 GMT 8 May 96

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In accordance with a press release issued at a press briefing which took place at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry on May 7, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister 'Abbas Maleki arrived on a two-day official visit to Ukraine on May 6. The aim of Mr. Maleki's visit is to share experiences in holding consultations on scientific research in the spheres of international politics, planning, education, and diplomatic personnel training.

On May 6, Mr. Maleki met with Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister Anton Buteyko to discuss development of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Iran. They also exchanged views on major international problems of mutual interest to their countries. A roundtable conference titled "Ukraine-Iran" was also held during Mr. Maleki's visit. He also held negotiations with officials of the Institute of Economics and the Institute of International Relations. Mr. Maleki is also scheduled to hold talks with officials of the Ukrainian Presidential Administration and the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences.

Ukraine: Udovenko Calls For Further Promotion of Kiev-Tehran Ties

LD0805074896 Tehran IRNA in English
0647 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 8, IRNA — Ukraine's Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko here Tuesday [7 May] emphasized the key role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region and underlined the need to further promote Kiev-Tehran relations.

Making the remark in a meeting with the visiting deputy foreign minister of Iran, 'Abbas Maleki, the Ukrainian minister termed the inauguration of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railroad as a historical event.

Maleki also signed a number of agreements in joint research projects here on Tuesday.

Under the agreements, Foreign Ministry's Center for Political and International Research in Tehran will establish cooperation with Center for Strategic Research and Center for Global Economic Studies of Ukraine in joint research studies related to the regional issues, the Caspian and Black Seas, in particular. The agreements also call for exchange of students, professors and researchers.

Meanwhile, Maleki yesterday met with advisor to Ukraine's President Vasiliy Kremen and reviewed strengthening of mutual ties. Maleki invited Kremen to visit Iran to explore ways of consolidating scientific and academic ties between the two countries.

Ukraine: Cuba Continues Medical Care to Ukrainian Children

LD0705212596 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1550 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, May 7 (Interfax - Ukraine) - Cuba is ready to continue annually providing medical treatment to up to 1,500 Ukrainian children affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Cuban

Ambassador to Ukraine Sergio Lopez Briel said in Kiev on Monday.

Around 15,000 Ukrainian children received medical treatment in Cuba during the last six years. Cuba assumed all corresponding expenditures, except transport expenses that totalled about $800 per person. The transport expenses were funded by sponsors.

About 400 Ukrainian children are currently receiving medical care in Cuba.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Kuchma Greets Nation on Victory Day

LD0705193596 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0800 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma sent greetings to the nation and to the veterans on the 51st anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War.

Our special tribute on this memorable day, says the president's message, is to the veterans of the Great Patriotic War who, having gone through unprecedented trials, endured and won a great victory for all of humanity. Their heroic deed lives forever.

The president stressed that respect and care for veterans is a sacred duty and an unbreakable law for government bodies. The state and the president of Ukraine will step up their efforts to increase pensions, to resolve housing problems, and to provide social benefits, and will do their utmost to improve veterans' living standards.

Radical changes in such a large country with such a difficult legacy cannot be quick and painless, but will take time, faith, patience, and calm, Kuchma said.

The president expressed confidence that "today the way toward solving most of our problems lies through the adoption of the new Ukrainian constitution. Only then will the state and society receive a tangible boost for stable development, and the change for the better will become irreversible. I am grateful to the veterans and to the majority of citizens for their support in the campaign to adopt the constitution as soon as possible."

He wished the people of Ukraine peace, harmony, and well-being.

Ukraine: Nationwide Public Hearings on Constitution Planned

WS0805084196 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0045 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, May 7. Nationwide public hearings on Ukraine's proposed constitution are planned to be held soon, Justice Minister Serhiy Holovatyy said Tuesday.

"A schedule to conduct the hearings has not been defined so far," Holovatyy said at a media seminar for Development of the Constitutional Process in Ukraine. "Everything depends on when the text of the constitution is put to referendum."

It is known, however, that the hearings will start in Lvov, then go on in Kharkov, Odessa, Simferopol, Donetsk, Rivne, Chernivtsi and Uzhorod, and finish in Kiev.

"The Justice Ministry has chosen such a forum to discuss the draft constitution in order to better make Ukrainian citizens aware of its contents," Holovatyy said.

The final hearings in Kiev will be televised six hours a day.

Ukraine: Development Plan of Black Sea Region Viewed

WS0805075096 Odessa ODESSKIYE IZVESTIYA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Natalya Ozhohova: "Unite and Rule; From the Conference of the Black Sea Oblast Leaders"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One does not have to possess a particular insight and special knowledge to notice the distinctive character of the seaside territories. They definitely have more life, and its aspects are brighter and deeper than those in the hinterland. In this sense, the Odessites are not so wrong in considering Paris an out-of-the-way place due to the fact that it is far from Odessa. Let us look at Odessa Oblast itself. Over 70 percent of the population and around 90 percent of total industrial production, as well as a greater part of the economic infrastructure and almost the entire recreation infrastructure, are concentrated in the Odessa Oblast seaside and coastal zone.

The peculiarity and economic value of seaside zones are so apparent that in other countries they are declared special national resources. As for Ukraine, the process of acquiring a "seaside" self-consciousness began only in 1992, when representatives of the oblast councils and oblast executive committees from Ukraine's four southern oblasts — Odessa, Mykolayiv, Kherson, and Crimea — convened in Odessa and agreed to begin joint work for elaborating a concept of development for the region. The Republic of Crimea eventually took an independent stand in this configuration, but, as before, it is actively participating in the elaboration of a program of socioeconomic development of the Ukrainian Black Sea region.

There have already been several consultative conferences, the last of them in Izmail, immediately following a working meeting between the Ukrainian and Romanian prime ministers. The "Volga" motor ship hosted state administration representatives from Odessa, Mykolayiv, and Kherson Oblasts, as well as those from the city of Sevastopol and the leadership of the Republic of Crimea. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister A.K. Kinakh, heads of ministries and departments, and members of our governmental delegation to the Ukrainian-Romanian negotiations. The conference was chaired by Prime Minister Y.K. Marchuk.

In opening the conference, Marchuk underscored that reforming the economy runs through the problem of mutual relations between the center and the regions and, in particular, that of the proportions between the state and regional budgets. One thing is undeniable: developing the regions is extremely important for the state economy. Coordinating nationwide, regional, and local interests is both a simple and complex task, which today determines the unusual character of the present economic situation in the country. The aim of the program of development of the Ukrainian Black Sea region, Odessa Oblast Administration Head R.B. Bodelan stated, is neither political nor separatist or centrifugal. On the contrary, the point is to unite efforts in searching for the ways out of the economic crisis; it is necessary to act unanimously and expeditiously. By the end of this year or even earlier, according to R.B. Bodelan, the elaboration of the program of development of the Ukrainian Black Sea region should be completed.

However, the discussion of the program directly confirmed the prime minister's apprehensions with regard to difficulties in combining local, regional, and nationwide interests. Oblast leaders accentuated characteristic features of each oblast, which should be taken into account by the program. Ministry leaders appealed for coordinating regional programs with branch and nationwide ones. It is necessary to look for common points without concentrating on differences; it is necessary to integrate the economy, to determine, for instance, how many ship-repair yards, ports, and other facilities are needed by the Black Sea region. It is necessary to determine regional specialization in order to avoid, as R.B. Bodelan put it, building plants for producing cans and bottles in each oblast. If we follow a distinctive way for each oblast, Y.K. Marchuk confirmed, we will kill the whole program.

Nevertheless, the distinction of each administrative-territorial entity in the region is a reality that cannot be ignored. The saying that water is life is doubly true for the Black Sea region, but the level of water supply and the progress of melioration in different oblasts are different. The determining factor in Crimea's economy is the health-resort and recreation complex; in Mykolayiv Oblast priority is given to nuclear power engineering; in Sevastopol political issues come before socioeconomic ones. The program should take all this into account, proceeding at the same time from the interests and peculiar features of the entire region. The task is difficult and, apparently, will not be resolved quickly. Besides, the program is a 15-year one, while the region must be developed right now. Therefore, local administration representatives at the conference proposed to supplement the concept with individual programs and to begin working out specific issues in specific branches, as it is being done, for example, in Odessa, where a program for developing the machine tool branch is being elaborated.

However, any serious local economic initiative will inevitably run against the indeterminate character of legal possibilities of the regions. The regions are a kind of master over their own territory, but they have no authority for managing their property, that is, they have no authority of their own. In connection with this, it is important to work out not only a good program, but also a mechanism for its implementation. Otherwise, the program will become just another archival document.

For instance, how to unite regional funds? What is the financial contribution of the state to the implementation of the program? In general, what are the sources of funds for this program? In short, the program directly confronts the main problem of all our intents and endeavors — where to get the money? Y.K. Marchuk did not make empty promises to the participants in the conference, but he also did not want to ruin the healthy romanticism of the program and, for this reason, he even did not allowed the finance minister to speak. However, as a piece of information for serious consideration of the participants, he announced that the implementation of the quite recently adopted program "Polesye" will require $32 billion, while Chernobyl requires $1 billion every year and the debt connected with Chernobyl, which was inherited by the present government from the former one, amounts to additional $8 billion plus interest. Thus, it is necessary, the prime minister emphasized, to look for nontraditional sources of investments and funds for the program. T.S. Shandra, first deputy economic minister of the Republic of Crimea, thinks that one of these sources is in attracting funds from citizens, from both Ukraine and abroad. She noted, however, that this process cannot be delayed: our people are rapidly becoming poor. The essential role of privatization issues in the program was also underscored by N.P. Kruglov, a representative of the Mykolayiv Oblast State Administration. B.V. Burkinskyy, director of the Odessa

Institute of Market Problem and Economic and Environmental Studies, asserted that those working out the program are searching for sources of profit and breakthrough solutions in branch programs.

However, the state and the government, too, should be more active in tackling practical problems of economic policy. We speak a lot about Ukraine's special geopolitical location, N.P. Kruglov noted, but make very little use of this advantage. Meanwhile, Russia is taking advantage of our ports and, traditionally, of our freight traffic. There is no clear system of subordination at the local level, Ukrainian Ambassador to Romania A.A. Chalyy noted, so it is easier to resolve some problems in Romania than in our country. The program, he added, should have a powerful international resonance. The entire basin of the Black Sea, a Sevastopol representative noted, is covered by free economic zones, which exist in Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania, thus creating an outflow of assets, in particular from Sevastopol. It is necessary to work out a concept of local free economic zones on the basis of big industrial enterprises.

In short, it is money and a harmony of interests which are necessary for a successful elaboration and implementation of the program of socioeconomic development of the Ukrainian Black Sea region. Participants in this program should be aware of the characteristic features of their regions, while the state should be aware of its role in the process of integrating Ukraine into the system of international economic relations. It is necessary, without feeling regret, to eliminate all non-priority issues from the program, Y.K. Marchuk believes, to concentrate on several purely regional problems (first place in terms of importance and urgency were given by the prime minister to the problem of water), and to resolve them while, at the same time, concluding the work on the concept. In general, as the head of government stated, this work is very important for the elaboration of the concept of state domestic policy.

Ukraine: Deputy PM Views Problems, Tasks of Nuclear Energy Sector

WS0805074996 Kiev UKRAYINA MOLODA in Ukrainian 30 Apr 96 p 3

[Report by Oleh Som: "New Winds and Old Problems in the Ukrainian State Nuclear Energy Committee"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The presentation to the Ukrainian State Nuclear Energy Committee [USNEC] of its new chief Viktor Chebrov, which was held by First Deputy Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko himself, did not become a ceremonial event, but an opportunity for a serious discussion on the current problems in the nuclear energy sector. While meeting with UKRAYINA MOLODA journalists 10 days ago, Pavlo Lazarenko underscored that, together with the appointment of a new chief of the USNEC, the functions of this department would be significantly altered. The USNEC would not be bothered any longer with problems of selling energy resources, given that these functions would be transferred to an energy company, so that the committee would be able to entirely concentrate on problems connected with production.

The meeting between Pavlo Lazarenko and nuclear power engineers proved that his attitude toward the problems of the nuclear power engineering sector is very persistent. According to him, the primary tasks of the USNEC is to launch domestic production of nuclear fuel for power stations; to complete the construction and put into operation the new power units for the Rivne and Khmelnytskyy nuclear power stations; to form a clear-cut executive administration hierarchy in the USNEC; and to normalize the payments for nuclear fuel in a timely manner. However, the executive power hierarchy does not mean a return to the USNEC's dictatorship. On the contrary, Pavlo Lazarenko supports the idea of greater independence for nuclear power stations in the resolution of economic issues. At the same time, he wants to restore order in this sector. Therefore, managers will be personally responsible for the observance of security requirements in nuclear power stations.

While drawing the attention to global problems of the sector, the first deputy prime minister did not forget its urgent problems. In the immediate future, it is necessary to entirely change the system of delivering nuclear fuel. This should be done now, at the stage of preparing nuclear power stations for the fall-winter period, and not when we have the first snowfalls. At the same time, it is necessary to sort out the activities of commercial structures which deliver nuclear fuel to Ukraine. According to Lazarenko, these structures managed to incur debts to the Russian producers (18 trillion karbovantsi [K]), as well as to the domestic consumers (they owe over K3 trillion to the Zaporizhya nuclear power plant alone)....

From now on, Viktor Chebrov, the new head of the USNEC, will be burdened with all these problems. However, Viktor Chebrov has had similar experience which he gained when he worked at the Kursk and Chernobyl nuclear power plants and when for three years he was chief of the production-technical department of the State Nuclear Energy Committee.

Viktor Chebrov was born in 1950 in the village of Makarovo in Kostroma Oblast. He is Russian, married, and has two children. He graduated from the Moscow

Power Engineering Institute, where he specialized in nuclear power plants.

Ukraine: Kuchma Decrees Setting Up Gas Holding Company

LD0705214896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Leonid Kuchma signed a decree Tuesday on the setting up of a state-owned Ukrainian Gas, or Ukrgaz, holding company, an official in his press service told Interfax.

The company, the official said, will look after the state interests in the course of privatization of gas businesses, the timely supplies of natural and liquefied gas and settlements for it and meeting the needs of the consumers.

Under another directive Kuchma amended his decree of December 28, 1994 on the privatization conditions in the gas industry.

The presidential press service reports that the amendments were made to reflect the revaluation of the fixed assets and to the additional issuance of shares by joint stock societies set up in the course of privatization.

Kuchma held a conference Monday with the top officials of his headquarters to discuss urgent issues in the socioeconomic and political life of the country. He also met with Viktor Musiyaka, his representative in the Supreme Soviet, and defense and interior ministers.

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Kuchma's Adviser on Foreign Trade Interviewed

WS0805105096 Kiev VSEUKRAINSKIYE VEDOMOSTI in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 5

[Interview with Andriy Leonidovych Derkach, the Ukrainian president's adviser for foreign economic issues, by Yuriy Khatmynskyy; place and date not given: "Let Us Descend From the Sky Onto Earth"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The situation in the foreign economic sector is a peculiar diagnosis of the competitiveness of our economy as well as an indicator of Ukraine's place in the world "table of ranks." Therefore, all "levels" of power concentrate their keen attention on this sector. This has already led to the first results. Our correspondent and Andriy Leonidovych Derkach, the Ukrainian president's adviser for foreign economic issues, have discussed these results, as well as the difficulties of this sector.**

[Khatmynskyy] Andriy Leonidovych, tell me please, which primary problems is Ukraine facing now in the sphere of foreign economic activities?

[Derkach] The first group of problems primarily comprises organizational and legal issues — the creation of the normative basis and the formulation of the strategy for the development of an entire system of legally binding acts. We have positive examples of the liberalization of foreign economic activities and of the work of intergovernmental commissions for cooperation. This is greatly credited to the current team of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade and to the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers' structural sections.

The second group of problems, so to speak, "brings foreign economic activities down to earth:" From the height of theory and euphoria, foreign economic activities must descend and approach the true needs of both national producers and the population.

The government of a state with a transitional economy must have and use levers to protect its market. The system of such levers must be flexible and dynamic. It must also envisage a temporary introduction or a temporary removal of customs duties and of excise taxes on certain goods (services), a competent use of procedures for the certification of imported products, licensing, and so on.

A lead in raising the above-mentioned issues must be taken by ministries, and the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade must coordinate their efforts. It is no secret, however, that we have a shortage of highly qualified staff in the sphere of foreign economic and legal issues. The Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade must provide consultations for interested ministries and departments and develop legally competent systems for export operations. In some cases, due to chronic nonpayments between CIS countries, there is a need for multistep barter deals, including exports of national raw materials in exchange for critical imported raw materials, the processing of imported raw materials on Ukrainian territory, and exports of final products. Of course, such systems are complicated, but any reform is a complicated process.

There is also another problem. I am implying the mentality of some managers in choosing their partners. I will provide the following example: It is always easier for a driver to drive along a six-lane road than along a two-lane road because there is more room for maneuvering. This is how we should operate: The number of partners should be as numerous as possible. Then there will be more opportunities for making a choice, particularly regarding critical imports of gas, oil, and coal.

Another issue is a stable staff who are conducting negotiations and adopting decisions regarding prices and volumes. It seems curious only at first sight, but there are the interests of citizens and of the country behind such decisions, and these decisions cannot be constantly changed.

[Khatmynskyy] Why does Ukraine have a permanent negative balance in its trade with Russia?

[Derkach] Yes, indeed, in 1995 Russian imports to Ukraine were worth $8,144 million, in other words, they increased by 5.2 percent. But Ukrainian exports to Russia increased by 26.3 percent and were worth $5,517 million. The balance of foreign trade turnover remained negative, and its value shrank by $749 million. According to available data, if one were to remove Russian unilateral exports restrictions — which make goods imported to Ukraine more expensive — there would have been a positive balance of foreign trade turnover in 1995 of $100 million.

[Khatmynskyy] Perhaps the rapprochement of our two legislations may be the way out of the current situation.

[Derkach] I believe that any unification and coordination imply a progressive process. If this principle is based on a mutually advantageous basis, which considers the positions of both sides and implies a search for things in common, such coordination is critical. This coordination must be held only on a bilateral basis, and not only with the CIS countries, but also with Europe. My personal opinion is that multidirectional integration is the future. Our primary criterion in this process must be Ukraine's economic needs.

As of today, we are witnessing regional integrational processes. They also include the creation of the Council of Heads of Ukrainian and Russian Oblasts That Have Common Borders; as well as the accession of several Belarusian oblasts, of Ukrainian central oblasts, and of the Crimean Autonomous Republic to this council. I think that such steps must be supported because they were triggered by purely economic interests and needs. For these oblasts this step was not a political one, but one which was caused by their ordinary daily problems — jobs, families, funerals, childrens' birthdays, and so on.

The other issue is that all these processes must be supervised by the state (this could be achieved by raising the level of national representation) and must meet the interests of international security.

[Khatmynskyy] How do you assess opportunities for attracting investments into the Ukrainian economy?

[Derkach] I think that investments into our economy will grow. For this, it is necessary to reduce political risks to the minimum, that is, by adopting Ukraine's constitution to ensure guarantees for land property, to legally protect investments, to choose priority directions for investing in the setting up of new enterprises — hence, in creating new jobs — and to provide these enterprises with tax breaks.

[Khatmynskyy] Who precisely must deal with the improvement of our laws?

[Derkach] I have already spoken about this when I answered your first question. I can only add that the dynamics of the current processes in the country requires the activization of operations in the system of foreign economic activities. One should not be afraid of adopting legal decisions aimed for the protection of the national market because the coordination process in Ukraine is often dragged on for weeks or even months. In some cases, it occurs that an enterprise operates for an official, but not otherwise. One cannot put up with this. In addition, I would like to concentrate on the system to prepare and select staff for work in the area of foreign economic activities. I think that it is necessary to more actively use foreign experts and consultants. The Finances Ministry and the Economics Ministry, for example, are using experts, and this provides only positive results. Even Peter the Great followed this path and, in my opinion, he did not make a mistake.

[Khatmynskyy] What is the role of the president in the resolution of issues linked to foreign economic activities?

[Derkach] First of all, I would like to stress that the Ukrainian president is paying his undivided attention to the improvement of foreign economic activities — a component of the socially-oriented economy — which meets the needs of our people and their daily problems.

I, as presidential adviser, can formulate my tasks — i.e. the analysis, drafting of proposals (options), and coordination and control of operations according to instructions from the Ukrainian president.

Belarus

Belarus: NATO Expansion Will Lead to 'Loss of National Sovereignty'

WS0805091396 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0620 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 7 May — An international conference titled "Security in Europe: Regional and Global Problems" started in the Minsk-based CIS Headquarters within the framework of the Minsk Forum on European Security Problems on May 7. The conference was organised by the National Centre of Strategic Initiatives "East-West." Representatives of parliaments, governments, defence foreign ministries, and research centres from more than 10 European countries and the USA, as well as representatives of diplomatic offices in Belarus are attending the conference.

In his opening address Anatol Maysenya, President of the Centre, said that among the security problems which are expected to be discussed during the conference, two questions are of the keenest interest. One of them is whether the West and Central and East European countries are ready to assist Russia and other CIS member states in joining the Council of Europe. The other is whether Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are ready to recognise themselves an integral part of European civilisation. In Mr Maysenya's opinion, negative answers to both questions inevitably lead to the restoration of confrontation between blocs as in Cold War times. He is convinced that there is no alternative to a united and integral Europe.

As regards the likely NATO expansion eastwards, Mr Maysenya said that this would be one of the most important problems under consideration. In his opinion, NATO's expansion will lead to the unnatural isolation of Russia and other CIS countries from Europe and the democratic community, and it may provoke negative attitudes in Eastern countries towards the West. NATO eastward expansion will not be conducive to Belarusian security, Mr Maysenya said. "Quite the contrary, this will result in the loss of national sovereignty, which has already been undermined by some recent historic initiatives," he noted.

Belarus: Parliament Speaker Presents Concept of Combined Economy

WS0805090696 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0620 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 7 May — A meeting between Supreme Soviet Chairman Syamyon Sharetski and representatives of the World Bank was held in Minsk on May 7. According to information received, Mr Sharetski expressed the opinion that the use of pure Western methods in the Belarusian economy may prove to be ineffective to lift the national economy out of crisis levels. In the Supreme Soviet chairman's opinion, a blind imitation of styles and methods adopted in the countries with highly developed economies may throw the Republic back because each country has its own way of economic development. "While the Western countries' economies were developing in a natural way, the CIS countries were following an artificial way," Mr Sharetski said. "Belarus had been on the wrong track for 70 years. Now we should come back to the basic historical highway."

According to Mr Sharetski, the best model for the Belarusian economy is a reasonable combination of state and private ownership. He defined the rejection of private ownership during over 70 years as a mistake. In his opinion, now it is essential to find a way to privatise small enterprises without destroying large-scale production in industry and agriculture. Search for such a way was main reason why privatisation in Belarus was so slow. In addition the government made a mistake, starting privatisation with banks while privatisation should have begun with industrial enterprises, and now it is very difficult to set right the mistake, Mr Sharetski noted. The parliamentary leader is convinced that banks can be privatised in a few days whereas the privatisation of industrial enterprises may take years. In his opinion, the fact that the banks in the Republic are private and the production enterprises are state-owned considerably complicated the situation in the economy. The World Bank representatives proposed the Supreme Soviet different ways of cooperation, including the organisation of joint economic seminars.

Belarus: Lukashenka Sends V-Day Greetings to Russian Leadership

WS0805084296 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0700 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Belarusian President] Alyaksandr Lukashenka has sent a telegram with greetings to Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroyev, and State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev on the occasion of Victory Day. Alyaksandr Lukashenka expressed his conviction that the friendship which has been tested by fire and time will develop through the deeper integration of the two countries and the viability and efficiency of the recently established new Community of Russia and Belarus.

Belarus: Lukashenka Sends V-Day Greetings to Veterans, Citizens

WS0705135896 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1200 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Republic's President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has greeted veterans of the Soviet Armed Forces, guerrillas, and members of underground organizations during World War II, employees of the rear services, and all citizens on the occasion of the upcoming holiday — Victory Day. [passage omitted]

We are celebrating this Victory Day in a difficult time. The Soviet Union no longer exists. However, the will of our peoples and the precept of heroes of the great victory to defend peace and accord in our home still exist. We will not swerve from their precept by a single step. During these May days, the 1945 victory confirms that only together, and primarily with Russia — the friendly relations with which we consolidated by the treaty on establishing the Community of the two states — is it possible to survive in a difficult time. We believe in the shining days of our country and people because the great ardor, willpower, and courage of the 1945 victors live in our hearts, and because the victory flag is with us. Dear compatriots, I greet you on the occasion of the great victory.

Belarus: Official Charges Brought Against Arrested Ukrainians

WS0805084396 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0620 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 7 May — The seven Ukrainians who are still in custody in Belarus for participation in the April 26 skirmishes with the militia are not likely to be released soon. According to information received in the Ukrainian embassy, 10 Ukrainians were initially detained. But three of them proved to be a Ukrainian television crew and were released. The other seven were held in the Minsk militia reception centre. On May 6 and 7 formal charges were brought against four of them. They were transferred to the pretrial prison on Valadarski Street. The rest are waiting for their formal charges which are expected to be announced one of these days.

A group of investigators appointed by the city Prosecutor's Office and headed by Syarhey Novikaw is examining this case. One of the detained Ukrainians is continuing a hunger strike. Another, an Afghan war and Chernobyl accident liquidation veteran, Volodymyr Solovey, has a serious asthma.

The Ukrainian Embassy is keeping an eye on the detained Ukrainians' destiny. Ukrainian diplomats meet with both investigators and the detainees almost every day. As the first secretary of the Ukrainian embassy, Vsevolod Kolotyy, told a BELAPAN correspondent, "we do not attempt to influence the actions of the appropriate bodies of the Republic of Belarus. We call upon everyone, including top-ranking officials, not to aggravate the situation concerning the April 26 incident. The Belarusian embassy in Ukraine also has problems these days, you know, because it is constantly picketed. Mass public protests are being lodged. We are also phoned by Belarusian citizens. Though many of them do not support the activities of the Ukrainian National Assembly and the Ukrainian National Self-Defence in Minsk, they want the Ukrainian citizens to be released as soon as possible and the unpleasant incident to be over."

Moldova

Moldova: Russian Troop Pullout From Moldova Under Way

LD0605185696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1548 GMT 6 May 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHISINAU, May 6 (Interfax) — Russian and Moldovan delegations launched an eleventh round of talks Monday on the status and pullout of Russia's 14th Army from Moldova.

Deputy Foreign Minister Vasile Sova leads the Moldovan delegation, while Ambassador at Large Vladimir Kitayev heads the Russian one.

Russia and Moldova had signed an intergovernmental agreement on the troop pullout in October 1994. The document provided for pulling out personnel, arms and equipment within three years from the time the treaty is approved. However, the Russian State Duma has not yet ratified the agreement.

Moldovan officials have repeatedly stated that Russia should pull out its troops within three years from its original signing. They have stressed Russia's obligations as a member of the Council of Europe.

The two countries also signed another agreement in early January 1996, setting a deadline for the pullout of engineering equipment. Under the document, Moldova, Russia and Moldova's breakaway Transdnestr republic are to share out and remove the equipment. However, Transdnestr authorities have impeded Moldova from removing its part of the equipment.

This round of talks, to last until Tuesday, is supposed to discuss all these issues. It will also sum up the results of work done and consider prospects for the future, the two chief negotiators told journalists.

Transdnestr officials had been invited to take part in the talks, Kitayev said. Sova also agreed with their presence.

However, Transdnestr officials failed to turn up by the start of the talks, an Interfax correspondent reported from the site. The reasons for their absence are still unknown.

The chief negotiators are expected to give a news conference on the results of this round of talks Tuesday night.

Moldova: Snegur Receives Russian Envoy for Dniester

AU0705114196 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 06/05/1996 (BASA-press) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin is firm on his intention to act in line with the accord signed with the Moldovan president in July 1992, Yuriy Karlov, Russian president's envoy to the Tiraspol talks, said today at a meeting with Moldovan President Mircea Snegur.

According to a presidential press release, Karlov said "examining latest data, Boris Yeltsin confirmed that a provisional document might be signed, which would establish the basic principles of a status for the Eastern districts proceeding from the premise of Moldova's territorial integrity."

Mircea Snegur and the Russian diplomat discussed the current relations between Chisinau and Tiraspol. The two said there were real chances to solve the Dniester problem by political methods.

President Snegur said the next round of talks would concern the guarantees that would be included in the provisional document. Petru Dascal, presidential adviser for foreign policy, told BASA-press that the date of next Snegur-Yeltsin meeting has not been fixed yet.

In the event that negotiators from Chisinau and Tiraspol finalize the provisional document until the CIS summit on May 17, it might be signed on the same day, said Petru Dascal.

Moldova: Popov Briefs Press on Foreign Policy Activities

AU0705123696 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 1930 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, May 6 (INFOTAG) — "Moldova's participation in the Council of Europe is not a theoretical slogan. It ought to be used for enhancing democratic reforms in the republic," stated Moldovan Foreign Minister Mihai Popov at today's briefing, which was dedicated to covering the results of the work of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Council of Europe member states which gathered in Strasbourg last week.

The Committee discussed two essential issues: security in Bosnia- Herzegovina, and adaptation to new changes. The ministers also adopted several declarations, in particular, on protection of journalists.

Before the Committee sitting, its participants gathered for an informal meeting to discuss "Russia and the Council of Europe" topic. Russian Minister Yevgenniy Primakov said his country was going to maintain most close ties with the Council of Europe, and would fulfill all commitments taken by Russia at joining the organization.

Moldovan minister Mihai Popov reminded Russia is supposed to fulfil also its promise to ratify, in 6 months' time after joining the Council of Europe, the Moldovan-Russian agreement on troop withdrawal from the Moldovan territory.

In Popov's words, Mr. Primakov has assured that integration in the CIS framework will not lead to restoring the Soviet Union. "The Former Soviet Union (FSU) republics' sovereignty and independence are irreversible," Primakov stated.

The Committee members have agreed to organize a monitoring of how each member country fulfils its commitments. In Strasbourg, Mihai Popov welcomed the decision but warned against the procedure's acquiring a discriminating, "examinational" character.

The Moldovan Foreign Minister Mihai Popov signed several European conventions and protocols to them when in Strasbourg last week, he announced at the briefing today.

These are the Convention on Prevention of Tortures and Punishments, Inhuman or Humiliating Attitude, Convention on Local Autonomy, Convention on Juridical Assistance in Criminal Proceedings, Convention on Extradition, Convention on Equal-Right Diplomas, which opens way to education in foreign universities, etc.

Mihai Popov has spoken up for working out a concrete mechanism which would allow to make more active the Moldova's relationship with the Council of Europe. In particular, such measures could include:

1. Monitoring — by the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Justice, and parliamentary Committees — of all conventions elaborated by the Council of Europe, and ratification of those documents which have importance for Moldova;

2. A better informing of Moldovan citizens on possibilities which they can take advantage of from Moldova's participation in the Council of Europe; publication of appropriate documents in separate brochures;

3. Setting up a group of expert lawyers for informing the public on the Moldova's participation in the Council of Europe;

4. Opening in Moldova of a Council of Europe's Information Centre where every citizen could get information on this international forum.

Moldova: Snegur Proposes Referendum on Government's Performance

LD0705214996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Mircea Snegur said in a televised statement Monday evening that he is prepared to propose to the people that a referendum should be held on how they assess the government's performance.

Developments in Moldova not only put the possibility of continuing reforms in jeopardy, but undermine the very statehood of the republic, Snegur said. "If no radical steps are taken to improve the situation, Moldova will face the risk of losing its independence and sovereignty — at first economic, by plunging into the pit of debts for fuel, and subsequently political," the president said.

"The people of Moldova have found themselves in unprecedented poverty and humiliation, which cannot be supported any longer," Snegur said. "People believe in nothing and no one, they want to hear nothing about reforms and feel increasing nostalgia for their past," he declared. "Corruption, robbery, crime, anarchy and disorder thrive in the country," Snegur said.

The government's debt in wages and pensions, which has surpassed 325 million leus (about $80 million) poses "national shame and catastrophe," the president said. Article 47 of Moldova's Constitution, which says that the state must take steps to ensure for every man decent living standards needed to maintain the health and well being for him and his family, is violated, Snegur stressed.

He pointed to the dire need to reshuffle the cabinet of ministers. He came to the conclusion that many government members are incapable of performing their duties or carrying out the program of activity adopted by the parliament in June of 1994, Snegur said.

According to him, the parliament should have formed a commission to reveal the reasons why the payment of wages and pensions was delayed "at least half a year ago, after the government's report made last November." "People do not want to wait till the numerous promises are fulfilled; their patience has been exhausted," the president pointed out.

Government reshuffling requires cooperation between the president and the parliamentary majority, and he is "prepared for such cooperation for the sake of resolving this problem as soon as possible," Snegur said.

"The policy pursued by the executive authorities resulted in a vicious circle the parliament alone can break," the president said. "The Constitution gives the parliament the right to demand that the government perform its functions duly and punish those who have lost the sense of responsibility."

Snegur urged deputies from the ruling factions - Agrarian Democratic Party and Socialist Unity - "to grasp the real dimensions of the social crisis Moldovan society is in, take corresponding decisions, give up support for cabinet ministers and the government as a whole, and begin to protect the constitutional rights of hundreds of thousands of citizens."

"If parliamentary majority deputies refuse to cooperate with the president in resolving this problem of national importance, I will have to resort to a prerogative granted by the Constitution to the head of state - appeal directly to the people," the Moldovan leader said.

In the same televised statement Snegur proclaimed his attitude to the presidential elections campaign in progress in Russia.

He is not afraid of giving support to his Russian counterpart since democratic and free-market reforms in Russia, on which the situation in the former Soviet space as a whole depends to a great extent, are linked with Boris Yeltsin, Snegur said.

"If Boris Yeltsin is defeated at the upcoming presidential elections, who wins - Zyuganov or Zhirinovsky - will make no great difference to Moldova. The consequences will be very lamentable," he noted.

Snegur urged ethnic Russians living in Moldova to vote for Boris Yeltsin.

The Russian president did much to settle the conflict in Transdniestria, Snegur pointed out. "Yeltsin has always supported Moldova's independence and territorial integrity, and the need to resolve the problem of Transdniestria by political means. Our stands coincide in this respect, and we work in this direction," the Moldovan leader said.

Moldova: Snegur Calls For Cabinet Reshuffle in TV Address

AU0805093096 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 2030 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, May 7 (INFOTAG) — The Moldovan leader Mircea Snegur has stated that the current situation in the republic is not only putting under threat the possibility to continue reforms, but is undermining Moldova's statehood as such.

Speaking at the "Presidential Hour" regular telecast on the national television last Monday [6 May] evening, Snegur stressed that should cardinal measures fail to be taken to improve the situation, Moldova will run the risks of losing its independence and sovereignty — first economically, by falling into the abyss of debts for energy, and then politically.

The Moldovan nation has been thrown into unheard-of poverty and humiliation which cannot be suffered any more. "The people refuse to trust anybody or anything any longer, do not wish to hear about reforms, and are feeling more and more nostalgic about their past — against the background of flourishing corruption, theft, crime, anarchy, and lack of public order," Snegur said.

One of the signs of the decay are wage and pension arrears, which have exceeded 324 million lei already. Snegur called this "a national shame" and "catastrophe." "The problem has been existing in reality — generated by the social-economic policy conducted in recent years by the current executive power organ."

The president has stated that Article 47 of the Constitution is violated in the republic, which reads that the state is obliged to take measures to ensure to every citizen decent standards of living sufficient to maintain good health and welfare to him/her and his/her family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and appropriate social protection.

"I have come to a conclusion that many members of the current government are just unable to perform their constitutional duties, including the Government Activity Program passed by Parliament in June 1994," Mircea Snegur said.

"The situation cannot be improved unless appropriate staff reshuffling is undertaken," believes the head of state.

"Due to the present-day policy conducted by the government, the republic has got into a vicious circle, which can be broken only by Parliament. Only this forum does possess all constitutional rights to demand from the executive organ fulfilling their constitutional functions, and to punish those who have lost the feeling of responsibility," the president emphasized.

He believes, the deputies from the two ruling parliamentary factions should perceive the real size of the social crisis the Moldovan society is in, should give up defending individual ministers and the whole government, and ought to begin defending the constitutional rights of hundreds of thousands of their compatriots.

In his opinion, Parliament should have set up a commission to clear up the reasons of the wage and pension arrears at least six months ago, after the government had reported its activities on last 7 November. "The population does not wish to wait any longer for the fulfillment of numerous promises, as the people's patience has exhausted," Snegur said.

He stressed that changes in the government will require a cooperation between the president and the parliamentary majority, and he is ready for such an interaction for the sake of solving the problem as soon as possible.

"If I am misunderstood again, if the parliamentary majority would not wish to cooperate with the president in resolving this all-national problem, then I will be forced to use one of my constitutional prerogatives and appeal directly to the nation with a request to voice their opinion and will concerning this problem," Mircea Snegur said.

Article 88 of the Constitution permits the president to demand from the nation its will on matters of national importance — through a referendum.

President Snegur has stated over the national television that the parliamentary majority fails to fulfill their obligations to the nation.

He said he had been right to have backed the Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova at the latest parliamentary elections, and to have promoted the formation of a stable parliamentary majority. "However, when it became clear that the majority does not promote democratic and economic reforms, there happened what has happened, and I am not sorry about it," Snegur said.

Speaking about the necessity to amend the Constitution, he said the democratic reforms in Moldova are in such a state that "we yet need to plow much in order to get the necessary shoots."

"Boris Yeltsin is the only candidate for the Russian presidency who is capable to continue reforms and maintain the current relations with FSU [former Soviet Union] republics," stated Mircea Snegur speaking over the national television on Monday.

The election of any other candidate, but Yeltsin, will be much less advantageous for Moldova, therefore "it makes no difference who of the two may win — Zyuganov or Zhirinovskiy."

In his words, the current Russian Duma has been demonstrating such an interest to the rebel Dniester Republic that it complicates the negotiations on the region's legal status, and on the Russian troop withdrawal from Moldova.

Moldova: Sangheli Rejects Snegur Accusations in Parliament

AU0805094196 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 2030 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, May 7 (INFOTAG) — The Moldovan Parliament today discussed Mircea Snegur's message of 24 April on social and economic problems.

On behalf of the government, reports on the economic situation were made by Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli, Deputy Premiers Ion Gutu and Valeriu Bulgari, Minister of Economy Valeriu Bobutac, Minister of Finance Valeriu Chitan, Minister of Labor, Social Protection, and Family Dumitru Nidelcu.

Andrei Sangheli pointed out certain positive changes taking place in the Moldovan economy. In the first quarter of 1996 the industrial output grew up by 4.5 percent, food industry by 15 percent, and light industry by 11 percent. The average monthly wage went up by 25 percent, and retail trade turnover by 15 percent. Fifty-one percent of the 1996 State Budget expenditures (1.4 billion lei) are intended for the social sphere.

Andrei Sangheli expressed bewilderment about the president's assertion that the positive moments in the reforms have been due to the activities of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, National Bank, and the Ministry of Privatization. "The reforms are the product of the joint efforts being undertaken by the president, Parliament, and government," the prime minister remarked.

He stressed that the presidential message says nothing about the real situation in the national economy, which silence makes all estimates of the social policy incorrect. In particular, commenting Snegur's assertion that the population's actual incomes went down by 23 percent during the past two years, the premier reminded that the same period was marked with a 35-percent reduction of the gross domestic product. "It is inadmissible to spend more than you earn, is it not?," Sangheli said.

He stated that the human memory turned too short for remembering such decisive reasons of the current hardships as the economic consequences of the Dniester conflict, the break-up of economic ties with traditional partners, errors made by previous governments, natural calamities.

Sangheli stressed the importance of economic links with Russia, where more than half of Moldovan exports lie. Russia is Moldova's biggest creditor. It supplies energy to Moldova without demanding prepayment. However, of 622 joint ventures registered in this republic, only 36 are Moldovan-Russian ones.

"The current social and political strain has begun last spring," when the president began opposing the party which won the parliamentary elections. "The president has ruined the constructive consensus of power branches and leading political forces in the country, and has only complicated the solution of dramatic economic and social problems. These clashes in top power echelons have cost a tremendous price to the society," the premier said.

Tackling corruption issues, Andrei Sangheli remarked that any accusations must only be proved in court, and only court can and may say whether a person is guilty or not.

He stated that a cabinet reshuffling will not lead to a situation improvement in the country. "Changes can only be attained through hard and productive labor," he remarked.

The prime minister called all parties and political movements to join efforts for overcoming the political controversies. On the eve of presidential elections, these differences should not aggravate the situation in the national economy, deteriorate the people's life, or upset peace and understanding, which currently exist in the republic.

The parliamentary debates lasted till late at night on Tuesday. INFOTAG will supply more details on Wednesday.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev Decree on Envoy To Oversee Baykonur Accord

LD0805084796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0610 GMT 8 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMAATY, May 8 (Itar-Tass) — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev issued a decree, endorsing plans to appoint a special envoy of the Kazakh president on the Baykonur cosmodrome. The decree signed on Tuesday [7 May] says that this step was taken for purposes of observing Kazakhstan's jurisdiction on the cosmodrome and ensuring constitutional rights of Kazakh citizens in the space launching complex.

The president's envoy shall promote the realization of an agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan on fundamental principles and conditions of the use of the Baykonur cosmodrome, an agreement on the lease of the cosmodrome and supplements to the agreement ensuring Kazakhstan's jurisdiction and rights of Kazakh citizens residing in the town of Baykonur (former Leninsk).

The presidential envoy is vested with broad powers. He is entitled to familiarize himself with the progress of the implementation of Kazakh state and interstate programmes of aerospace activities on the cosmodrome and submit proposals on the activities of the space launching complex to the Russo-Kazakh intergovernment commission.

Kazakhstan: Agreement With Russia, Oman on Oil Pipeline Viewed

LD0705215196 Almaty DELOVAYA NEDELYA in Russian 3 May 96 pp 1,5

[Unattributed commentary: "Doys Has Gone, but the Pipeline is Still There"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the main results of the visit to Almaty by a Russian delegation headed by Boris Yeltsin was the signing of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) protocol. During the ceremony, Nurlan Balghymbayev, Kazakh oil and gas minister, called it "an event of international importance, which demonstrates the wish of the three governments and international oil companies to find a balanced resolution to the problem of developing the Kazakh power sector." However the optimistic statement of the Kazakh president [Nursultan Nazarbayev], who backs the minister, has fairly shaky foundations. The point is that the document signed in Almaty was not an agreement on the CPC, as had been predicted, but a protocol that sets a so-called "transition period of several months, during which the sides must fulfill certain obligations and prepare a final agreement on reorganization of the CPC," as the official press release put it.

DELOVAYA NEDELYA has repeatedly reported on the implementation of the project of the century. That is why it would be wise to outline the latest events in the run-up to 27 April. After the return of the Kazakh official delegation headed by Nursultan Nazarbayev from the United States on the last day of October 1995, Balghymbayev announced the failure of the idea to set up the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, and announced the beginning of the implementation of a new project to construct an export pipeline from Tengiz to Novorossiysk. Oman was left out of the new project. The main partners were Kazakhstan and Russia, owning 25 percent each. This time it was also announced companies like Chevron, Mobil, British Gas, Agip, and Russia's LUKoil would participate in the project. However Edward Smith, director general of the CPC, announced at the beginning of 1996 that Oman was continuing to render financial and technical aid to the CPC. He said the statement of the prime minister [Akezhan Qazhygeldin] that CPC-2 would replace CPC was erroneous, and Oman, having delegated a number of its top state officials to the CPC's board of directors, confirmed its intention to participate in the project the same year, which was proof of the sultanate's aspiration to be a member of the consortium in the future too.

Sittings of the board of directors were then held several times, at two-week interval. Then information seeped out from behind tightly closed doors that Oman had surrendered John Doys [name as transliterated], having achieved the right to participate in the project, and that major oil companies working in Kazakhstan, as well as several Russian companies, are actively dividing 50 percent of the shares in the consortium.

At last, two days before Boris Yeltsin's arrival in Kazakhstan, the 22d session of the board of directors was held, which, according to cautious statements by its participants, was due to result in a new division of the CPC. Expectations came true, and in the afternoon representatives of nine oil-extracting companies signed a protocol at the Friendship Palace to reconstruct the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which a few hours later was blessed by the signatures of Nurlan Balghymbayev and Yuriy Shafranik, Kazakh and Russian oil ministers, and Sultan Makbul, minister of trade and industry of the Sultanate of Oman.

Russia will now get 24 percent of the consortium, Kazakhstan 19 percent, and Oman 7 percent. The distribution of shares was carried out by a purely pragmatic method, according to expenditure already made. Eight more companies, as it is written in the protocol, "have exclusive rights to obtain shares in the CPC during the transitional period." Chevron has the right to obtain 15 percent, LUKoil 12.5, Mobil and Rosneft 7.5 each, Agip and British GAS 2 percent each, and the Kazakh holding companies Munaygaz and Oryx 1.75 percent each. These firms have to gradually take over the current financing from Oman within three days from signing the agreement. Russian Transneft, whose participation was predicted at the beginning, has been left out. Apparently, it has been given the role of operator of the project as a consolation prize. It is known that LUKoil was actively laying claim to that role, with the trump card that CS First Boston was supposedly ready immediately to invest $2.4 billion in the project, but only with LUKoil guarantees. However Vagit Alekperov [LUKoil chairman] had to be satisfied with a 15 percent share in the CPC.

Independent experts are fairly restrained in their comments on the CPC agreement. Most anxiety was caused by the fact that Kazakhstan now controls only 25 percent of the pipeline, compared to Russia (at 44 per cent), which is on the threshold of presidential elections and therefore rather unpredictable in the long term. In addition, oil-extracting companies hold exactly half of the shares in the CPC, and are potential users of the pipeline system, which will objectively try to reduce transport expenses, which in turn will lead to a fall in the profitability of the project. Finally, one should not forget that Russia's participation in CPC-1 was ratified by a Supreme Council resolution in July 1993. It now looks like no-one can say how long the communist State Duma will ratify the CPC-2, not even its speaker.

However, even given all these drawbacks, one cannot but recognize the importance of the "Almaty landmark" in the long history of the Kazakh export pipeline, which is itself already a fact. The time of the CPC-2 has come.

Kazakhstan: President Urges Stimulation of Investment

LD0705222496 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1748 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMATY, May 7 (Interfax) — The National Bank of Kazakhstan (NBK) should move from anti-inflationary to investment-stimulating policies, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev told a banking conference in Almaty Tuesday.

Last year, the NBK managed to augment its gold and hard currency reserves and ensure the relative stability of the tenge, the national currency, Nazarbayev said.

The NBK also brought down inflation from 1,258 percent in 1994 to 160 percent in 1995, he said. However, inflation is still high in the republic.

According to the bank's 1995 annual report, domestic investments in 1995 halved against 1994, overdue payments piled up to a dreadful extent and the general situation of the banking system worsened.

In 1991 through 1993, as many as 240 banks opened in Kazakhstan, but 60 were closed last year and 15 more have shut since the start of 1996, National Bank Chairman Uraz Dzhandosov said. The republic will see the banking situation improving and investments rising by the end of this year, he said.

As many as 40 state-run banks were privatized in 1995, State Property Committee Chairman Sarybay Kalmurzayev told the conference. The budget received 394.61 million tenge from the sale of state-owned stakes in these banks, he said. The current exchange rate for the tenge is 66.5 per $1.

The state will sell its stakes in another 13 banks in 1996, Kalmurzayev said.

People's savings with the Sberbank of Kazakhstan rose by 27 percent in the first quarter of !996, he said.

A presidential decree will approve the NBK report after June 10, when independent international auditors complete their inspection of the bank, Nazarbayev told the conference upon the end of the discussion.

According to the Kazakh Constitution, the NBK is directly subordinate to the president, who approves its annual reports with his decrees.

Kazakhstan: Police Seize Largest Uranium-235 Haul

MK0505133796 Moscow OBSHCHAYA GAZETA in Russian
No. 17, 5-11 May 96 (signed to press 4 May 1996) p 2

[Report by Sergey Borisov: "A One Centner of Uranium Record Set!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Law-enforcement agencies in Kazakhstan have carried out a successful operation detaining two criminals from Ust-Kamenogorsk who stole more than 100 kilograms of low-enriched uranium-235. This is one of the largest shipments of radioactive fuel seized in the republic. Yet, statistics show, certainly not the last.

Investigation showed that the thieves had operated on the premises of the Ulba holding company. This company was cited a year and a half ago in connection with a series of scandalous publications: The firm (known for a large-scale production of so-called "nuclear tablets") was involved in the sale of 600 kg of uranium, earlier used in Kazakhstan for military purposes, to the United States. The "goods" were estimated at the time at over $20 million. It is unclear at this point to what extent company employees were involved in nuclear deals, but very recently a car carrying four kilograms of uranium, one kilogram of thorium, and 10 ingots of rare-earth indium has been stopped on its way out of Ust-Kamenogorsk. Investigators have discovered whole caches with analogous contents but have not yet established to whom they belong....

Armenia

Armenia: Seleznev: Russia Sees Armenia as 'Strategic Partner'

LD0705182496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1253 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, May 7 (Interfax) — Chairman of the Russian State Duma Gennadiy Seleznev has said that Russia sees in Armenia its strategic partner, the same as Armenia sees in Russia.

Addressing deputies of the Armenian National Assembly in Yerevan on May 7, Seleznev was satisfied to note that the Russian people do not hold anti-Armenian sentiments.

"Of course, we would like to have more active progress in terms of rapprochment of Armenia's and Russia's positions," said Seleznev.

He believes that if Armenian and Russian legislation converges, it will be easier for both countries to solve many economic and political problems.

Seleznev said that the bilateral cooperation in the sphere of culture and education is developing most successfully. A Russian university will be opened in Armenia and an elite Armenian high school in Moscow shortly, he said.

Seleznev believes that the visit to Armenia soon of Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin will promote Armenian-Russian relations.

First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party Sergey Badalyan has told Interfax that he is to meet Seleznev on Tuesday.

Armenia: Russian, Armenian Parliament Speakers Comment on Ties

NC0705210396 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1900 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev, who is on an official visit to Armenia, and Chairman of the Armenian National Assembly Babken Ararktsian held a news conference today. Interest in the news conference was high and so the conference room was packed with reporters.

In briefing the reporters on the aim of the visit, Babken Ararktsyan underlined that good traditional ties with Russia's former parliament are being maintained with the present one as well, in keeping with the interparliamentary agreement of 1994.

The chairman of the National Assembly also stressed the importance of bilateral ties, notwithstanding the fact that the Armenian and Russian parliamentarians are also taking part in the work of international organizations.

For his part, Gennadiy Seleznev stated that rapprochement and further deepening of integration between the two countries were broached during all the meetings, which passed in a very warm atmosphere. The State Duma speaker noted that a group friendly with Armenia has been formed at the Russian parliament, under the chairmanship of Nikolay Ryzhkov.

The parliament speakers then replied to reporters' questions.

Armenia: Further on Assembly Chairman's Remarks on Duma Trip

NC0805105296 Yerevan SNARK in English 1043 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, May 7 (SNARK)—NA [National Assembly] Chairman Babken Ararktsyan stated at today's meeting with the delegation of Russia's Duma that Russia remains Armenia's friend and the cooperation with Russia is and will be the priority line of the Armenian foreign policy.

According to him, the visit of Duma's delegation to Armenia proves that both countries realize the necessity of all-round cooperation including interparliamentary ties. The meeting is in compliance with the interparliamentary cooperation agreement signed by the Armenian Supreme Council and Russian Federal Assembly in Moscow on June 10, 1994.

Ararktsyan expressed hope the meeting will promote to expand multilateral and long-term interactions between the two parliaments on the basis of friendship, mutual respect, good-neighborly relations and non-interference into internal affairs of each other.

Armenia: Armenia Viewed as 'Important Strategic Partner' of Russia

NC0705212396 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1404 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, May 7 (Noyan Tapan) — A delegation of the Russian State Duma led by Duma's Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev met Tuesday with Armenian parliamentarians. During the meeting Seleznev briefed those present on current political and economic situation in Russia and pictured prospects for development of bilateral relations between Russia and Armenia.

Pointing to the complexity of Russia's internal political situation, Seleznev said that the only way out was democratic election of the State Duma and President.

Among poignant and urgent problems, State Duma's Chairman pointed to the peaceful settlement of the Chechen conflict, restoration of agriculture and military-industrial complex.

Seleznev described the unleashing of war in Chechnya as "a gamble" which the State Duma was not happy about, realizing that "in the Caucasus conflicts are easily sparkled, but are slowly settled." Seleznev voiced hope that the conflict in Chechnya would be settled through peaceful negotiations, saying that he "sees the light at the end of the tunnel".

Russia should first restore its collapsed agriculture, Seleznev stressed. 65 percent of all agricultural produce are now being imported by Russia from other countries. "The agriculture is dying", Seleznev emphasized. Russia needs thorough restructuring of its agrarian sector.

As to the military-industrial complex, Gennadiy Seleznev said this branch "is currently in rather bad conditions". This is largely accounted for the collapse of the USSR and disruption of relations between the Soviet republics. As a matter of fact, "today Russia is the main orderer". Seleznev said that the ratification of "CIS-2" project and a program of NATO's extension to the East was a big problem. He described these two documents as being incompatible, noting that the Russian State Duma is against NATO's extension to the East.

In conclusion Seleznev stressed that Armenia is an important strategic partner of Russia and there are all prerequisites for closer cooperation. He highly appreciated the activities of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, which helps make legislation and codes of CIS countries closer so as to facilitate resolution of a number of international issues. Duma's Chairman described opening of the Armenian Gymnasium in Moscow and the Russian University in Yerevan as an important step towards closer cooperation. Seleznev voiced hope that the upcoming visit by the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to Armenia would promote further development of bilateral relations.

Armenia: President Meets Officials in Moscow After PRC Visit

NC0705134796 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1300 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Having concluded his official visit to the PRC, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan stopped over in Moscow on his way to Yerevan. He held a working meeting with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in Moscow this morning. Matters relating to the implementation of the friendship and cooperation agreement between Russia and Armenia and political and economic issues of mutual interest were-broached during the meeting.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan is expected to meet Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the evening. This was reported by the Armenian presidential press service.

Armenia: Ter-Petrosyan Invites Chinese Businessmen to Cooperate

LD0705213696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, of Armenia, sees Chinese economic reform as a good example for Armenia. He made a statement to that effect as he met with the President of China's State Council Jiang Zemin in Beijing. President Ter-Petrosyan was in China on an official visit on May 3 through 6.

As he shared impressions of a tour of some of China's industrialized provinces, Ter-Petrosyan said he hoped for mutually beneficial cooperation with Beijing. He believes that Chinese enterprises having a high technological and intellectual potential may become good partners for Armenian enterprises, which are faced with an acute shortage of foreign investments.

The Armenian leader said that China's maritime Guangdong province, one of the most industrialized ones, could use Armenia as a bridge to market its goods in the CIS and East European markets.

Ter-Petrosyan said that it was a great honor for him to be in China and that all-round contacts with Beijing were of great political importance to Yerevan.

Jiang Zemin described the first-ever visit of independent Armenia's leader to China as a land-mark event heralding a new era of cooperation between the two countries.

Five bilateral agreements were signed, including a joint communique on friendly relations, inter-government agreements on the prevention of double taxation, on air links and on cooperation between banks, as well as a program for cooperation by the Armenian and Chinese culture ministries in 1997-1998.

At his meeting with the Premier of China's State Council Li Peng in Beijing Ter-Petrosyan said he was satisfied with the results of the visit and pointed again to the great importance of dynamic cooperation between the two countries. He said that Armenia and China had much in common.

President Ter-Petrosyan invited Li Peng to pay an official visit to Armenia.

Li Peng said he hoped that the Armenian leader's visit would give a fresh impetus to friendly relations between the two countries. He recalled that after the break-up of the USSR China at once recognized the newly-independent states in the post-Soviet space, including Armenia.

Li Peng said China maintained that each people had the right to choose its own way of development. "We respect the choice of the Armenian people and support Armenia's intention to become a full-fledged member of the international community," he said.

About the future of Chinese-Armenian cooperation Li Peng said he would like either country's economy to complement each other.

Toward the end of his visit to China President Ter-Petrosiyn met with the chairman of a standing committee of the All-China People's Congress Qiao Shi.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Diplomat Expresses Concern Over Russian-Armenian Contacts

LD0705222296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1748 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, May 7 (Interfax) — A senior Azerbaijani diplomat on Tuesday expressed concern over recent military contacts between Russia and Armenia.

The results of a recent official visit to Yerevan by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and the "strengthening military alliance" between Russia and Armenia "has not escaped the notice" of Baku and "is making Azerbaijan give serious thought to its security," Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told Interfax.

"In Azerbaijan, any form of military cooperation with Armenia, an aggressor country which is occupying one-fifth of Azerbaijan's territory, is viewed with suspicion," he said.

"Unfortunately, the Commonwealth of Independent States security treaty is such that it allows one member of the pact to occupy the lands of another treaty member and attack it" while the other members "do not react to the aggression."

"The treaty cannot ensure security for its members. Therefore it cannot be considered satisfactory for Azerbaijan from the security point of view," Azimov said.

"We believe that the Commonwealth must make an unbiased assessment of the actions of Armenia, take concrete measures to stop the occupation of Azerbaijani lands and make maximum efforts to have Armenian armed forces withdrawn from the territory of Azerbaijan and ensure the territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic. Without this, any form of military cooperation within the CIS framework will not look serious in Baku's opinion," he said.

Azerbaijan: Deal With Moscow Seen in Arrest of Former Officials

LD0705233296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1800 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Former Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Tofig Gasymov was due to appear in court in Baku but his trial has been postponed. Azerbaijani Prosecutor General Eldar Hasanov has arrived in Moscow from Baku. His mission is to persuade Moscow to hand over former President Ayaz Mutallibov, who is in Moscow. (Belchin Neimanov) reports from Baku:

[Neimanov] Former President Mutallibov was arrested by the Moscow militia at the beginning of last month at the request of the Azerbaijani authorities. These authorities accuse the former president of complicity in the events of 20 January 1990 and recent coup d'etat attempts. However, if official Baku was counting on the rapid extradition of the former president, it has been disappointed. Moscow has, so far, restricted itself to handing over former Defense Minister Rahim Gaziyev. The question of Mutallibov seems to have been pushed into the background, but this may be only temporary.

Independent observers were somewhat taken by surprise by the arrest of Mutallibov and the handing-over of Gaziyev because these politicians were openly pro-Russian. Some analysts are even talking about a deal. In their opinion Moscow has evidently decided to express its gratitude to Baku in this way for some concessions on important issues. Observers note that this may involve a strategic partnership between Russia and Azerbaijan.

However, at the same time, observers note that it is still too early to draw final conclusions since Mutallibov is still in Moscow. The Russian side is continuing to state that it does not yet have sufficient grounds to hand over the former president. According to statements from spokesmen of the Russian prosecutor's office, the issue will be clarified only at the end of this month.

Azerbaijan: Aliyev 'Harshly' Criticizes Cabinet of Ministers

LD0705213196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 7 May 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev harshly criticized the cabinet of ministers at a recent meeting which focused on how to raise its performance. The Interfax Presidential Bulletin is publishing this speech described by some observers in Baku as "the most serious warning to the republic's government over the last two years."

Aliyev said he regarded the government's performance as unsatisfactory.

Four months have passed since the government first met in session to consider its own structural reorganization after the new constitution was adopted, he recalled. However, "absolutely nothing" has been done since then to reorganize the work of state management bodies, he said.

"Virtually nothing has been done to improve the work of the cabinet of ministers, ministries and bodies," Aliyev said. "No changes are seen in the economic management system."

Despite the fact that this year's budget has been adopted, the economy is still "lagging behind," while earlier problems rise over and over again, Aliyev said. "No wonder, given the lack of large-scale structural changes in the work of the cabinet of ministers."

The present government structure "has not changed since the times of the former Soviet Union," Aliyev said. The government machinery works just as 15-20 years ago, he said. Many ministries and bodies "only changed the sign, while their essence, including the style of work, production relations and even personnel remained the same," he said.

Aliyev recalled that he had given the government three weeks on January 8, 1996 to elaborate proposals and recommendations on its own reorganization, but nothing has been done since then, despite a series of presidential decrees to this effect. "This is an unacceptable phenomenon," he said.

Plants and factories are still working to the old rules, though last year's presidential decision enabled them to reorganize their work on the basis of their own proposals. This was done with the only purpose to give them more freedom, but the matter is still at a dead point, though more than a year has passed since then, he said.

According to Aliyev, enterprises should enjoy more freedom to diversify their activities.

"We opened a broad way to initiative and entrepreneurship," Aliyev said. "Probably,government assistance is required to promote some bold and innovative ideas, but the government does not tackle this issue at all."

The average monthly growth in Azerbaijan's industry, agriculture and construction reached 8 to 10 percent in the 80s. Even now stabilization and even a small growth is possible in some sectors of the economy, he said. If it does not happen, it means that the government works bad, he said. "We cannot work like this any longer," he stated.

"Where are the results of your work, if statistics show a production decline from month to month?" he asked rhetorically. "Each of you has been given much trust, but you have not justified this trust, though we work together."

Aliyev demanded the ministers comply with all his instructions and resolutions. In particular, he criticized the government for not holding production meetings for a long time. At the same time, the government has an "inflated machinery working as if it were Soviet times," he said.

Aliyev recalled of his earlier promises to cut the government machinery "affected by the bureaucracy disease since the Soviet times."

"Paradoxically, but true: now that the republic gained independence bureaucracy has reached a scale unseen before," he said. This is one of the main problems causing popular dissatisfaction and impeding the government's efforts to better manage the economy, he said.

Aliyev said he had received many reports about poor work with documents sometimes unread for many months. "Why should we need such a cabinet of ministers then?" he asked himself.

Many government officials fell victim to giant mania, Aliyev said. For instance, ministers have several phone numbers, including internal, city, direct and special. However, all of them are managed by "numerous secretaries," and sometimes it proves impossible to locate senior officials for five, ten and even fifteen days, he said.

Aliyev ordered to "remove all government telephones from the receptions of ministers and other senior officials today so that only those entitled to them could use them."

The government also should show more flexibility in its work, Aliyev said. To achieve this, it should have a regularly updated plan of action and daily meet in session on important issues, he said.

Aliyev regretted the lack of clearly defined areas of responsibility in the government. "It is still unknown who is responsible for the industry," he said.

Aliyev demanded each of the deputy prime minister take up a sector of the economy to be responsible for. He also demanded the prime minister "give his deputies as much freedom as possible to that they could seriously tackle problems in their areas of responsibility."

In addition, Aliyev stressed the need to create a working mechanism to flexibly solve day-to-day issues and introduce weekly brief government meetings on the most important issues.

"All this must be done by the end of this quarter," he underlined.

Speaking on production efficiency, Aliyev recommended to the government "to find out why this or that product is manufactured, to whom and how it will be sold and what the enterprise and the republic as a whole will have from it."

Aliyev said he was concerned about the "monthly and quarterly growth in mutual debts inside the republic." "It is time we put an end to this," he said.

Aliyev stressed the need for a wider and more energetic introduction of the principles of a market economy in Azerbaijan. He criticized the State Property Committee for the slow pace of privatization which started about a month ago. "At such a pace, we will not cope with privatization in five years," he noted.

The agrarian reform is also lagging behind, Aliyev said. "Privatization in the animal husbandry has not even started, though the agriculture minister received specific instructions as far back as in early April," he said.

"On the whole, the economic reorganization should strengthen the progressive management elements and liquidate the outdated ones, the spare links in the economic management system," Aliyev said.

Personally addressing Prime Minister Fuat Guliyev, Aliyev said he did not accept his excuses of being too busy to deal with the structural reorganization of the government. "I am unsatisfied with such explanations," he said. "The tasks set must be solved."

Azerbaijan: Parliamentarians Question Legality of CP's Activities

MM0705133196 Moscow PRAVDA ROSSII in Russian 7 May 96 p 1

[Report by Zaur Kadymbekov: "Defending Their Right"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baku — Some time ago the republic's Communists were not permitted to take part in the National Assembly elections.

Today certain National Assembly [milli-medzhlis] deputies are taking sterner measures: Some 26 of them have adopted an appeal to the general prosecutor, justice minister, and the Supreme Court to examine whether the communist party's activities break the republic's laws. In other words, they wish to declare that the Communists are violating the Constitution and going against the act of independence and the results of the referendum on this subject held 29 December 1991. Similar accusations have already been made against the communist party in the past and it was even banned for some time; however, the republic's Supreme Court restored its rights. Now another attack is being mounted on the left-wing forces.

Communist Party of Azerbaijan Leader Ramiz Akhmedov considers the republic communist party to be an absolutely autonomous and independent political organization that maintains contacts with all communist parties, including the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

The Azerbaijani Communists' slogan continues to be: "Sovereignty, democracy, and socialism."

Azerbaijan: Former Foreign Minister's Trial Postponed

LD0705132996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1310 GMT 7 MAy 96

[By Sevindzh Abdulayeva and Viktor Shulman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, May 7 (Itar-Tass) - The trial of former Azeri foreign minister Tofik Gasymov scheduled for today has been postponed for ten days. Gasymov is to stand trial on charges of involvement in an abortive coup d'etat in mid-March, 1995.

A decision to postpone the trial was adopted by the Azeri Supreme Court which took into account poor health of the defendant and appeals made by lawyers of other two defendants arrested on charges related to Gasymov's case, Adyl Gadzhiyev, former adviser in the administration of Azeri ex-president Ayaz Mutalibov, and Austrian citizen of Turkish extraction, Kenan Gurel. The lawyers motivated their appeal, saying that they had to thoroughly look into the cases of the other two defendants.

The 58-year old Tofik Gasymov has been under medical observation since he was released from a detention center of the Azeri National Security Ministry where he had been kept for almost five months. The court took these circumstances into account, but ruled that Gasymov should submit a medical certificate.

Before the decision to postpone the trail was announced, the court had read out an appeal made to the Supreme Court by a group of physicists from the national Academy of Sciences, a number of local and international human rights organizations who asked to postpone the trial. The court decided that the suggested arguments were sufficient to meet their request.

Georgia

Georgia: Foreign Minister Comments on Abkhazia, Peacekeeping Forces

LD0705233996 Tbilisi BGI in Russian 1735 GMT 7 May 96

[News conference by Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagharishvili with unidentified correspondents on 7 May; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] The mandate of peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia expires in June. Did you discuss the mandate issue at the United Nations?

[Menagharishvili] Drawing up a new mandate is a difficult process. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov is arriving in Georgia on 11 May, and we shall discuss the issue. The United Nations is concerned over the fact that Russia and Georgia have not yet come to a single stand on resolving the Abkhaz problem.

[Correspondent] What does Russia disagree with on the mandate issue?

[Menagharishvili] The Russian side asserts that it is impossible to secure the return of all the refugees en masse to Abkhazia because this might lead to confrontation between Russia and Abkhazia. We suggested a step-by-step return but have not received a response yet. If the mandate is not drawn up before 17 June, the Russian peacekeeping forces will have to leave Abkhazia in compliance with a resolution adopted by the Georgian parliament.

[Correspondent] You said that you had asked the United Nations to step up its efforts to settle the issue. Did you mean only UN observers?

[Menagharishvili] No, not only that. The stepping up of efforts means the involvement of other countries, and not only as observers.

Georgia: Parliament Decree on Measures To Settle Abkhazia Conflict

AU0705130196 Tbilisi SAKHALKHO GAZETI in Georgian 23 Apr 96 pp 1, 2

["Georgian Parliament Decree on Measures To Settle the Conflict in Abkhazia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since 1992, with the support and aid of external forces, separatists who have been active for decades on the ancient territory of Georgia — Abkhazia — have been carrying out the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Georgians, which has cost the lives of more than 7,000 civilians. More than 1,000 have gone missing and up to 10,000 people have been wounded and crippled. They barbarically shot Zhiuli Shartava, chairman of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Council of Ministers and member of Parliament, and other leading figures. Eighty percent of the Abkhazian population have been expelled from their native land, more than 20,000 homes have been plundered and laid to waste, and schools, kindergartens, cultural centers, churches, and architectural and historical monuments have been destroyed.

Greeks, Jews, Russians, Ukrainians, and Armenians resident in Abkhazia and Abkhazians themselves have also become victims of the terror organized by the separatists and the apartheid regime; some of them have been killed in the war while a significant number have been forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in other towns and rayons in Georgia and abroad.

Abkhazia has been transformed into a ravaged anarchic uncontrolled territory for terrorists, dealers in drugs and weapons, and others involved in organized crime, a territory which is threatening to spread new misfortunes not only to Georgia but also to adjoining regions.

The separatist forces have temporarily taken the territory of Abkhazia from Georgia using inhuman and most cruel methods and by carrying out ethnic cleansing and murders on a massive scale. The demographic situation has been changed by the use of force, which is continuing to this day.

Certain Georgian officials also bear some responsibility for this tragedy. The failure to protect the railway and highways in the appropriate manner and other criminal actions provided the separatists with the excuse to unleash military operations that had been planned long before.

The Georgian Parliament also points out that certain Georgians and the representatives of other nations and nationalities likewise played a somewhat negative role in the Abkhazian conflict, the tragedy that unfolded, and the destabilization of the political and economic life of the country; their improvident and criminal action infringed upon the dignity and life of many of our compatriots and assisted and, to this day, assists the separatists in implementing their antistate and traitorous designs.

It should be pointed out with alarm that the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Georgians has been continuing since the cessation of military operations, particularly in Gali Rayon where more than 1,000 people have died since September 1993. Recognized human rights and freedoms are being violated on a wide scale.

In spite of lengthy negotiations that have been conducted among the sides that participated in the Abkhazian conflict under the aegis of the UN and through the mediation of Russia, it has not been possible to reach a compromise on the questions of the return of hundreds of thousands of refugees to their places of residence and Abkhazia's status within Georgia on account of the irreconcilable position of the separatists. The separatist regime is strengthening its military potential with all its means, is creating structures and attributes that are characteristic of an independent state, is distorting history, and is establishing a misanthropic and racist ideology. It is also significant that the decisions adopted by the CIS heads of state in Almaty, Minsk, and Moscow are not being implemented and the separatists are consciously and unilaterally violating the agreements that have been reached with the help of external forces. The peacekeeping forces whom Russia allocated in agreement with the UN are unable to fulfill their function. They have not been able to ensure the security of the population, oppose the ethnic cleansing and genocide of Georgians, and ensure the return of persecuted and displaced persons; moreover, certain subunits are even today carrying out arbitrary actions in Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha rayons and taking an active part in contraband operations, which is creating an unstable situation in the conflict zone and the adjoining territory. As a result of negotiations with Russia, it has not been possible to extend the rights of the peacekeeping forces, which would have enabled practical steps to have been taken for the return of those who have been persecuted. It has not been possible to isolate the separatist regime politically and economically and for Georgian border troops to carry out the preliminary check of freight bound for Abkhazia.

The Georgian Parliament is guided by the Georgian Constitution, recognized norms of international law and the basic documents adopted by the UN and the OSCE, and Georgia's national-state interests, expresses the supreme will of the Georgian people to restore the country's territorial integrity and ensure the return of those who have been persecuted to their native homes, and decrees:

1. Sharing the decisions of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council of 19 July and 22 November 1995 and 8 March 1996 and, on the basis of materials submitted by the Georgian Procurator's Office and the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council, to assess the events that have developed and are taking place in Abkhazia as aggressive action directed against Georgia's statehood and territorial integrity by separatists aided and supported by Russian antidemocratic reactionary and other external forces, which has resulted in the violation of the country's territorial integrity, the occupation of an indivisible part of Georgia — Abkhazia —, the formation of a criminal regime, the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Georgian people, and the expulsion of a large number of other peoples, including Abkhazians, from Abkhazia.

2. In connection with the reasons for the conflict, its instigators and organizers, the actions of those who directly carried out and organized ethnic cleansing, genocide, and terrorist acts, the corruption and economic crimes that occurred when military operations were taking place in Abkhazia, the damage inflicted upon the population, and the crimes committed following the introduction of peacekeeping forces into the conflict zone, the Georgian Procurator's Office is to implement measures provided for in law and inform the Georgian Parliament of the decisions adopted.

3. The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to present to the UN proof of crimes against humanity, genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and terrorism committed by the separatists in Abkhazia and request that an international tribunal be formed.

4. Reports and other materials from the Georgian Procurator's Office and the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council on crimes committed by the separatists and their supporters are to be sent to the heads of CIS countries, the UN Security Council, other international organizations, and foreign embassies in Georgia.

5. To entrust the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

a) To intensify work on fulfilling the demands presented by the Georgian president to the director general of UNESCO on implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention;

b) In order to inform the world public about the terrorist actions of the regime governing occupied Abkhazia and its links with international terrorism and to elicit an appropriate response, to take an active part in the work of international organizations and conferences on questions connected with the struggle against terrorism.

6. To entrust the Georgian Ministry of Justice to take into account that the population was drawn into military operations during the time of the conflict in Abkhazia by means of disinformation, threats, and blackmail and to draw up and present to Parliament a bill on freeing from criminal responsibility, following the restoration of Georgian jurisdiction, those who participated in the conflict with the exception of those persons who have been exposed as being involved in instigating and organizing the conflict and military operations and also committing particularly serious crimes against the military and humanity.

7. To define the processes that have been taking place in Abkhazia as a political conflict in Abkhazia and not as a Georgian-Abkhazian conflict.

To determine five subjects as taking part in the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia: The legitimate Abkhazian authorities and the separatist grouping in Abkhazia as the sides participating in the conflict; Georgia on whose territory the conflict has been taking place; Russia as an interested party; the UN.

8. To confirm as null and void the so-called Republic of Abkhazia Constitution adopted by the separatists and the institution of president, legislative acts, treaties and agreements with the structures of foreign countries, and also all bodies of administration and their decisions and civil law settlements that run counter to Georgian legislation and that of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic.

9. To confirm that the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council and Council of Ministers that are located in Tbilisi are the sole legitimate bodies of state power and administration that express the interests of the Abkhazian population.

10. To request that the Georgian government renders effective assistance to the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic authorities in resolving problems determined by status and conditioned by the real situation.

To ensure the definite participation of representatives of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic during discussion of questions connected with the settlement of the conflict.

11. In connection with the unilateral violation by the Abkhazian separatists of agreements achieved through the mediation of the UN and other international organizations, a comprehensive appraisal of these agreements is to be carried out by experts and the Georgian Parliament committees for defense and security and constitutional and juridical questions and legality are to present within a month the appropriate conclusions regarding this question.

12. On account of the fact that Russian peacekeeping forces under the CIS mandate are unable to guarantee the unconditional and safe return of forcibly displaced persons and refugees to their places of residence and protect their lives and dignity and in the event that the existing mandate is maintained and Georgia's proposals for a new mandate are not taken into account, to view the peacekeeping operation as having no prospects and to withdraw the peacekeeping forces from Georgian territory within two months.

The return of those who have been persecuted and refugees to Abkhazia is to be implemented in conditions of a full guarantee for their safety and the de facto restoration of constitutional order.

13. The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, and the State Border Protection Department, together with the corresponding state departments, are to take measures to implement the decisions adopted at the Almaty, Minsk, and Moscow summits of the CIS heads of state on the nonviolability of the state border, condemning and isolating separatism, and other cardinal questions.

14. Bodies for the protection of human rights in Georgia are to take effective measures to expose facts of ethnic cleansing, genocide, torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment of Georgians on the territory of Abkhazia and mass violations of human rights there and extensively inform the world public about this.

15. The Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council and Council of Ministers are, within the limits of their jurisdiction, to intensify work on implementing organizational and information and ideological measures connected with the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict and effectively carry out their activities both inside the country and abroad — in international organizations.

16. On the basis of the Georgian Constitution and in accordance with principles recognized by international law and with the participation of representatives of the multinational general public in Abkhazia and all nations and nationalities, to determine the political status of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic in terms of

large-scale autonomy within the framework of a single Georgian state, which envisages Abkhazia having its own Constitution, Parliament, supreme executive and juridical bodies, hymn, flag, coat of arms, and other attributes of statehood, and its own jurisdiction in economic, social, financial, and other questions.

17. To entrust the corresponding parliamentary committees, with the participation of representatives of all nationalities from the general public in Abkhazia, to speed up the drafting of bills on Georgia's territorial-state organization and the delimitation of powers.

18. Attaching particular importance to the problems of the people living in the Kodori Gorge, the Georgian government is to carry out effective measures to ensure that the presidential decree of 17 August 1995 on the Kodori Gorge is implemented.

19. To recommend to the Georgian Government and the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council and Council of Ministers to draw up proposals on measures to honor those who have perished in the Abkhazian conflict.

20. The corresponding Georgian parliamentary committees, the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council and Council of Ministers, and the Ministry for Georgian Refugees and Resettlement, together with the Ministry of Finances, are to present to the Georgian Parliament by 1 June a bill "on those who have been persecuted."

21. The Georgian Government is to devise within two months a program on additional measures for the social protection of those who have been driven out of Abkhazia.

22. The Georgian Parliament supports the restoration and strengthening of the good will of Georgian citizens and traditions of historical relations and fraternal and kindred ties between the Georgian and Abkhazian peoples, the development of bilateral and multilateral contacts at different levels taking into account the interests of other peoples living in Abkhazia, and the stepping up of popular diplomacy.

23. Proceeding from the Georgian president's initiative — "Peace and Stability in the Caucasus" — to create joint groups from the Georgian Parliament and the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic Supreme Council to work with the peoples and parliaments of the Caucasus.

24. To recommend to the Georgian National Security Council that it draws up within two months a state program on a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia in accordance with the military-political, constitutional, legal, socioeconomic, and information situation and new realities and taking into account the measures in this decree.

25. In order to support this Georgian Parliament decree, central and local bodies of state administration, political parties, public organizations, economic and commercial structures, and various funds are to show increased concern for and give greater assistance to the families of those who have perished in the Abkhazian conflict and to the population that has been completely persecuted and contribute to the full restoration of Georgian jurisdiction in Abkhazia and the establishment of constitutional order there.

26. To view it expedient to create the corresponding Georgian parliamentary commission in connection with Abkhazian problems.

To entrust Georgian Parliament Deputy Chairman V. Qolbaia with coordinating the implementation of the measures stipulated in this decree.

27. To entrust the Georgian Parliament Bureau with controlling the implementation of the decree.

28. The Georgian Parliament is to discuss the progress being made in implementing the decree in June of this year.

29. The decree is to be published in the press and be broadcast on radio and television.

[Signed] Georgian Parliament Chairman Zurab Zhvania. [Dated] Tbilisi, 17 April 1996.

Georgia: Abkhazians To Determine Status in National Referendum

AU0705132396 Tbilisi AKHALI TAOBA in Georgian 26 Apr 96 p 1

[IBERIA report: "A Referendum on the Status of Abkhazia Will Be Held"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Vladislav Ardzinba, leader of the Abkhazian separatists, has stated that a referendum on the status of Abkhazia will be held within the next two months. According to Ardzinba, the referendum is being held because Georgia has not agreed to Abkhazia's proposal to form a federative union.

In Ardzinba's view, the question in the national referendum has already been determined: "Would you like closer interstate relations with Russia or would you like closer interstate relations with Georgia?"

Georgia: Provisions of Memorandum on Ossetian Conflict Detailed

AU0805093696 Tbilisi KAVKASIONI in Georgian 26 Apr 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "What Does the Memorandum Signify?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As we have already informed you, a memorandum on measures to ensure the strengthening of security and mutual trust between the parties to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict was initialed with the participation of Georgia, so-called South Ossetia, North Ossetia, Russia, and the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] in Tskhinvali on 17 April.

This is the first serious political document that has provided the means for a full-scale settlement of the conflict. Being guided by the principles of a state's territorial integrity and the self-determination of nations, the sides have agreed to the following:

1. The parties to the conflict reject force or the threat to use force to exert political, economic, and other forms of influence upon one another.

2. The parties will take all necessary measures to halt any illegal actions and any infringement upon the rights of individuals on ethnic grounds.

3. The parties will implement real measures to resolve in a fitting manner the problems of those refugees and displaced persons who have suffered as a result of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

4. The parties agree that those persons who participated in the armed conflict but who did not commit any military crimes and also crimes against the civilian population will not be liable to prosecution.

5. The sides point out with satisfaction the positive character of the practice of regular meetings of representatives of the law enforcement bodies to improve the crime situation in the conflict zone.

6. In accordance with the progress of the process of a full-scale settlement and on the basis of a special agreement, the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict will be demilitarized stage by stage. It is possible only for peacekeeping forces to be located in the zone.

7. The parties view it expedient to work within the mixed control commission.

8. The parties express their willingness to hold meetings between Georgian and Ossetian sociopolitical organizations, scientists (with the participation of representatives from the Russian Federation and other countries), and also journalists with the support of international including nongovernmental organizations to exchange objective information. The parties will take measures so that representatives of the mass media can move about and work in safety.

9. The parties point out with satisfaction the willingness of the Russian Federation to act as a guarantor and North Ossetia — the Alan Republic — to participate in implementing the memorandum and also the readiness of the OSCE to facilitate this process.

Estonia

Estonia: Meri Discusses NATO Admission, Russian Minority

AU0605150896 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 6 May 96 p 3

[Interview with Estonian President Lennart Meri by Zoltan Szalai; place and date not given: "We Must Have Solidarity"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Szalai] Several leading Western politicians spoke in a restrained way recently in connection with the Baltic countries' NATO membership. How do you see your own chances?

[Meri] The question of Estonia's NATO membership actually affects the security of the entire Baltic region. Parallel with the European integration of the three Baltic countries, the Baltic Sea gradually becomes the internal sea of the Union and the NATO. We are aware of the fact that Russia firmly opposes any NATO expansion toward the East because Moscow cannot accept the fact that NATO is the basic pillar of security in Europe. I recently read a study by the Rand Research Institute on the chances of new NATO members. This study paints a rather pessimistic picture of Estonia's chances and that of the other Baltic states. At the same time, Tallinn does not share the opinion of the U.S. researchers. Although there are quite a few possibilities of guaranteeing security in our region, Estonia's NATO membership is the basis of any solution acceptable to us. NATO General Secretary Javier Solana visited Tallinn recently and, prior to this, I traveled to Brussels and confirmed to all my negotiating partners that Europe's security is indivisible. Regional instability threatens the peace of the entire continent. Besides, I think that solidarity between reform countries in Eastern-Central Europe must be strong enough to make sure that any country that joins the European organizations first will use all its power to facilitate the acceptance of the other countries as well.

[Szalai] The Russia Duma recently questioned the legality of dismantling the Soviet Union. Has this fact caused any fear in Estonia?

[Meri] Estonia is primarily focusing on its own internal reorganization, not the decision of the Parliament in Moscow. At the same time, it is unfortunate that the Russian deputies failed to draw the necessary lessons from their own history even after so much time that has passed. They killed millions of people in the Gulags, and quite a number of victims were Russian. Obviously, the Duma decision enjoys great popularity. Because of the increasingly difficult living conditions, the old Soviet era seems to be again desirable for the masses. In addition, Russia has never had any democratic traditions, and one cannot take up democracy overnight like an overcoat.

[Szalai] Estonia received lots of criticism in recent years for the treatment of the ethnic Russian minority. How do you evaluate the situation of the Russian minority at the moment?

[Meri] I think that the situation of the Russian minority has improved considerably. The fact that the Russians living here do not want to return to Russia and the Russians living in Russia would gladly relocate to Estonia proves this. Not only is the living standard higher in Estonia, but we also respect human rights incomparably better than Russia. At the same time, I am not claiming that we have solved all the problems and that we do not have a Russian minority problem.

[Szalai] It seems that Hungarian-Estonian relations have somewhat declined after the change in the regime. Has the recent visit by the Hungarian president given an impetus to our bilateral relations?

[Meri] There have always been special relations between Hungary and Estonia and, therefore, it is particularly unfortunate that we have failed to make use of the potential inherent in these relations in the past five or six years. However, you must understand that reviving Estonia's international contacts used a lot of our energy. However, I paid several visits in Hungary, and each time I was deeply impressed by the Hungarians' results, and quite a few of these results were achieved before the collapse of the Berlin Wall. In addition to developing our bilateral relations, it is extremely important now to coordinate our European integration policy. President Arpad Goncz's visit also made a considerable contribution from this point of view.

Estonia: Deputies Agree With NATO Nuclear Weapons in Estonia

LD0605200496 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1200 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Members of the Riigikogu agree, in principle, with the siting of NATO nuclear weapons on Estonian territory, but they do not believe that NATO deems it necessary.

Eino Tamm, the chairman of the Riigikogu Foreign Affairs Commission, told BNS that, in principle, Estonia should not be against NATO siting its nuclear weapons on Estonian territory if this is required by the strategic and tactical situation. Tamm said it was unlikely that NATO will want to station nuclear weapons in Estonia during peacetime. He noted that under no circumstances must Estonia impose a veto to nuclear weapons when joining NATO because then there will be no point in applying for full membership of the organization.

Jaanus Betlem, a member of the Fatherland Alliance and the State Defense Commission, too, said that when Estonia joins NATO, it should agree to nuclear missiles if this is a precondition for joining the organization.

Andra Veidemann, deputy chairman of the Liberal Centrist faction of the Riigikogu, told BNS that NATO was first of all interested in siting nuclear missiles in the Central European states. The bringing of nuclear weapons to the Baltic states will create confrontation between NATO and Russia, which the organization, no doubt, tries to avoid, Veidemann said.

Indrek Kannik, former defense minister and member of the right- wing faction in the Riigikogu, said that if Estonia becomes a NATO member, it should be prepared to fulfill obligations from its side and not just wait for services from the organization.

Andres Tarand, the leader of the Moderates, noted the many aspects of the situation regarding NATO were not clear for Estonia but, surely, Estonia must not give a categorical refusal to nuclear weapons.

NATO leaders have indicated that new members of the organization should agree with the siting of nuclear weapons in their states.

Estonia: European Parliament President Comments on EU Membership

LD0605164296 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1400 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Estonia should resolve fishing issues with Latvia and the border dispute with Russia before starting the European Union membership talks, European Parliament President Klaus Haensch told the Riigikogu [Estonian parliament] today.

Haensch said that it is inconceivable that a new member would be accepted into the EU every six months. Membership will be given in groups and the groups will be identified as the result of talks. So the acceptance of new members to the EU will take place every two to three years. Haensch said that it has been often asked whether the Baltic states will be given EU membership separately or together. Haensch believes that the Baltic states have a better chance if they act together, but of course the speed of the slowest state must not be the decisive factor.

Haensch said that it is impossible to give dates for becoming a member of the European Union. It would be irresponsible to say that this will take place in year 2000, but it would be even more irresponsible to say that this will take place in 2010.

Haensch said that the faster Estonia manages to resolve the issues of customs, trade, efficient border controls, crime fighting, and cleaning up the Baltic Sea, the easier it will be for Estonia to become a member of the European Union.

Tonight, Haensch will meet Prime Minister Tiit Vahi, President Lennart Meri, members of the Riigikogu Foreign Affairs Commission, and various other factions.

Estonia: Defense Chief Denies Allegations on IRA Arms Deals

LD0705180496 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1100 GMT 7 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Colonel Johannes Kert, commander of the Estonian Defense Forces, said today that the Kaitseliit [Defense League] has never sold or mediated the sale of weapons to the Irish Republican Army or to Chechnya.

Kert, formerly the commander of the Kaitseliit, told journalists today that the ITAR-TASS news agency report on arms trade between IRA and the Kaitseliit was total disinformation.

ITAR-TASS yesterday reported, quoting Russian intelligence, that Estonian extremists have repeatedly sold weapons to the terrorist IRA.

Estonia: Foreign Ministry Declines To Comment on Russian Statement

LD0705224096 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2138 GMT 7 May 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Albert Maloveryan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tallinn, 8 May — The Estonian Foreign Ministry has declined to make any comment on the statement by Grigoriy Karasin, spokesman of the Russian Foreign Ministry, on the Estonian authorities' intention to expel from the Republic several Russian diplomats whose activities are allegedly incompatible with their official status. Russian diplomats are not named. An ITAR-TASS correspondent has learned in a conversation with Andrey Yakushev, the press attache of the Russian Embassy, that the staff of the embassy also know nothing about it. There has been no official statement from the Estonian Foreign Ministry. [passage omitted]

Estonia: Estonian, Danish Military Commanders Hold News Conference

LD0705205996 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1200 GMT 7 May 96

[Report by Tanel Talve on news conference by Admiral Hans Garde, Danish chief of defense, and Colonel Johannes Kert, commander of the Estonian Defense Forces; place and date not given — Garde speaks in English with superimposed translation into Estonian]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Talve] Admiral Garde deemed it important to have cooperation between the two countries and not just unilateral assistance.

[Garde] I think it is promising, with the steps we have taken to help each other and learn from each other.

[Talve] Garde said that Estonia's participation in international peacekeeping forces together with Danish troops was a good example of developing cooperation. Garde said that cooperation can be developed even further.

[Garde] Primarily, I think that we have some possibilities from the Danish side to give Estonia useful advice for joining NATO.

[Talve] Garde noted that Denmark has been a NATO member for over 45 years and, thanks to this, it can pass over its experience in bringing defense structures into line with NATO standards.

Colonel Johannes Kert, commander of the Estonian Defense Forces, said that one had to learn from Danish experience.

[Kert] We here have sometimes argued whether total defense and the system of total defense are needed at all or justified for integration into NATO, whereas Denmark is an example that has its own defense league and has organized, perhaps, the ideal example of total defense as to how military and civilian structures work together and how cooperation between them is organized. So Estonia has a lot to learn from Denmark and even copy from them — also, from the organization of various structures of the defense forces.

We can learn how to use the structure of the defense forces — the navy, for example, during peacetime so that naval vessels would not lie in the roads but would carry out peacetime tasks. At the same time, the peacetime tasks would be training for the naval forces.

I believe, however, that we will be able to utilize all the opportunities the Danish side is offering to us. Rather, Estonia is facing the danger of not being able to utilize all the opportunities offered to us. This would be a little shameful.

[Talve] Kert said that this did not mean that the Estonian Defense Forces did not need any foreign aid at all.

[Kert] The Estonian Defense Forces need foreign aid. However, the Estonian Defense Forces must become able to say what they do need. Clearly, we do not need to collect here a scrapyard from all over the world. We need a very precise clarity among ourselves about what we want, what we do not want, in which order of priority, and from whom.

Estonia: Vahi Meets With Icelandic Prime Minister

WS0705102996 Tallinn ETA in English 0755 GMT 7 May 96

[From 7 May, SONUMILEHT, pp 3,4; "News Bulletin" No. 87]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister of Iceland David Oddsson arrived yesterday for a three-day visit to Estonia. At the meeting between the Estonian Prime Minister Tiit Vahi and David Oddsson the talk concentrated on the bilateral relations, developing cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and international issues. Vahi and Oddsson signed an agriculture agreement and discussed visa free travel between the countries. Oddsson declared Iceland was in principle agreeable to a visa free travel but would have to coordinate the matter with the other Nordic countries. Ratification of the European convention on refugees by Estonia would be necessary before the free visa system could be established, Oddsson told. The new system might come into force simultaneously with the free visa travel beginning between Estonia and Finland. Vahi assured Oddsson of Estonia moving towards the ratification of the convention. Both prime ministers stressed that fighting against crime was a necessity by the visa free travel system. Vahi informed Estonia paid much attention to securing its eastern border and stopping illegal trade and drug and arms smuggling.

David Oddsson told Iceland would support Estonia as well as the other Baltic countries in their aims towards speedy integration with the European union and NATO.

Iceland's prime minister visited yesterday Riigikogu [parliament] and had a meeting with the Chairman Toomas Savi. Oddsson took a walk in the old part of Tallinn in the afternoon and was received by the Mayor of Tallinn Jaak Tamm. Oddsson had a meeting with President Lennart Meri.

Prime minister of Iceland will visit today SAKU BREWERY and will leave for a tour in Saaremaa island in the afternoon.

Estonia: Latvian Fishing Boats Enter Estonian Waters

WS0605123796 Tallinn BNS in English 1001 GMT 6 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ABOARD COAST GUARD BOAT 'MARU', May 5, BNS — Four Latvian fishing boats entered Estonian waters in the Gulf of Riga during Friday and Saturday despite Estonia's decision to freeze the accord which grants Latvians the right to fish in the disputed area.

All four boats continued to fish in the Estonian waters until receiving orders from the coast guards to leave.

One of the Latvian vessels erred as much as two kilometers into the Estonian zone Saturday morning.

No violations of the border were recorded during the earlier part of Sunday, but coast guard officials said several Latvian vessels were catching fish exactly on the border.

Erni Tiitmaa, commander of the coast guard boat Maru, said the guards could do nothing more than observe the situation and order the violators to leave.

On Thursday five Latvian fishing boats attempted to fish in waters off Estonia's Ruhnu Island.

Estonian border guards note down the Latvian boats attempting to enter Estonian waters despite the ban, and will later withhold fishing licenses to them.

A ban on trawling in Estonian waters in the Gulf of Riga is in force until the end of May. Besides, Latvian fishermen should not be fishing there at all, because a fishing agremeement agreed upon by the Estonian and Latvian prime ministers in mid-April in Vilnius has not yet been concluded.

Estonian Prime Minister Tiit Vahi said the accord is now frozen until the differences can be resolved.

"Because there have been certain deviations from the agreements and the principles are not fixed precisely, this agreement is frozen until the differences are resolved," Vahi said.

Estonia has said it won't allow Latvian vessels into its waters before Latvia agrees to the terms of the fishing agreement presented by the Estonian foreign miniistry a week and a half ago.

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